



A PLAN FOR TODAY, A PLAN FOR TOMORROW
Building a Stronger Washington through Immigrant Integration

A YEAR ONE REPORT FROM THE WASHINGTON NEW AMERICANS POLICY COUNCIL
October 2009

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OCTOBER 2009

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRS

We are pleased to present the year one report of the New Americans Policy Council, **A Plan for Today, A Plan for Tomorrow: Building a Stronger Washington through Immigrant Integration**. The report offers strategies for integrating immigrants in the state of Washington and strengthening our communities.

The New Americans Executive Order 08-01, signed by Governor Christine O. Gregoire on February 20, 2008, sets Washington apart by creating innovative approaches to recognize, appreciate, and tap into the talents and energy that immigrants bring to our state. The Order recognizes the need for a comprehensive, proactive approach to immigrant integration that views newcomers as contributors who will continue to add to the prosperity and well-being of our entire state. It also recognizes the importance of partnerships among state agencies, local governments, community organizations, businesses, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to ensure successful immigrant integration. To facilitate the development of comprehensive immigrant integration strategies, the Order established a New Americans Policy Council to deliberate and provide recommendations to the Governor on efforts the State could undertake for successful immigrant integration.

This report is the product of the New Americans Policy Council's deliberations, from November 2008 to October 2009. It focuses on recommendations within key areas that the Policy Council identified as critical for successful integration. All recommendations within the report received unanimous support from the diverse members of the Council, which included representatives from law enforcement, faith, labor, business and immigrant organizations.

We thank Governor Gregoire and the state agencies that partnered in this effort. We are also grateful for contributions of the experts in the areas covered in this report who provided great insight. Finally, we thank the community members and leaders who provided testimony at New Americans Public Hearings in Tacoma and Pasco. Thanks to their input, our state will continue its leadership in bringing newcomers fully into our economy and our community. The members of the Policy Council were a tremendous asset in bringing clear-eyed and astute thinking to this endeavor. The voices at the table brought many diverse perspectives and experiences, but we were unanimous in our desire to help integrate immigrants as positively and quickly as possible.

Thanks to the Office of Financial Management and the Migration Policy Institute for supplying requested data on tax contributions and underemployed immigrant professionals respectively. Special thanks also to all the presenters and guests who worked with the Policy Council to help them better understand the issues faced by immigrants and refugees. Finally, we thank the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for providing funds to OneAmerica for the New Americans project, including the public hearings and the printing of the report. Special acknowledgement goes to Leslie Goldstein, Governor's Office; Tom Medina, Office Chief, Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA), staff to the Council; Sarah Curry, Policy and Research Associate, OneAmerica and Anne Hankins, Special Projects Manager, DSHS Economic Services Administration, for assistance in writing and developing this report.

Sincerely,

Liz Dunbar, *Chair* Pramila Jayapal, *Vice Chair* Gilberto Mendoza, *Vice Chair*

WASHINGTON NEW AMERICANS POLICY COUNCIL

Elizabeth Dunbar, Chair, Tacoma – Executive Director, Tacoma Community House; retired from the Department of Social and Health Services, where she was Deputy Secretary; she serves as a board member of Associated Ministries and secretary of the Japanese Americans Citizens League.

Pramila Jayapal, Vice Chair, Seattle – Founder and Executive Director of OneAmerica; she serves as Vice Chair of Rights Working Group national coalition, and vice president of the Institute of Current World Affairs.

Gilberto Mendoza, Vice Chair, Pasco – Small business owner; he serves on the Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Benton-Franklin Red Cross Board of Directors and Pasco School District Parent Advisory Board.

Akhtar Badshah, Redmond – Senior Director of Community Affairs at Microsoft; he serves as a Board Member of United Way King County, Council on Foundations, Youth Entrepreneurship & Sustainability, and the US Chamber of Commerce's Business Civic Leadership Center. He also sits on the Advisory Boards of the following organizations: World Affairs Council (Seattle), Santa Clara University Center for Science Technology & Society, and UW Business School.

Jorge L. Barón, Seattle – Executive Director of the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project; he is also a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and the Washington State and King County Bar Associations.

Dmitri Chaban, Spokane – More than 15 years of experience working with refugees, most recently with World Relief Spokane; he also volunteers as the co-pastor of a local church.

Luis Fraga, Seattle – Associate Vice Provost at the University of Washington; he is a board member for New Futures and served as secretary of the American Political Science Association and as president of the Western Political Science Association.

Troy Hutson, Seattle – Assistant Secretary of the Economic Services Administration at the Department of Social and Health Services; he served on the Washington Council on Adult Education and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

Ken Irwin, Yakima – Yakima County Sheriff; he serves as president of the Washington State Sheriffs' Association and is a member of the Northwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Executive Board; Irwin also serves on the methamphetamine and gang committees of Citizens for Safe Communities.

Jeff Johnson, Olympia – Special Assistant to the president for the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO; he was a professor of labor economics and labor studies, and researcher at the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations.

Van Dinh-Kuno, Mukilteo – Executive Director of Refugee and Immigrant Services Northwest; she also serves on the Snohomish County United Way Board, Washington Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Board, Providence Mission Committee, city of Everett Diversity Council and Washington School Impact Committee.

Hilary Pennington, Seattle – Director of Post Secondary Success and Special Initiatives at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; she was the president and CEO of Jobs for the Future.

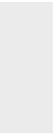
Michael Ramos, Seattle – Executive Director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle; he has worked on living wage and housing issues, as well as ministry in the Latino community.

Rick Sawyer, Seattle – International Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer of UNITE HERE Local 8.

Ezra Teshome, Seattle – Agent for State Farm Insurance; in 2005, he was honored as one of the top 10 global health heroes at the Time Global Health Summit for his volunteer service toward the eradication of polio in Ethiopia.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION IS A DYNAMIC, two-way process in which immigrants and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities. As an intentional effort, integration engages and transforms all community members, reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Washington has had a long history of welcoming immigrants and bringing them into the greater community. We have understood that we need to include all members of our community and foster their ability to contribute to the economy and society. While the state of Washington has worked on elements of immigrant integration for years, comprehensive strategy for immigrant integration began in February 2008 with the signing of the New American Council Executive Order by Governor Christine O. Gregoire. The Executive Order established a New Americans Policy Council that would provide recommendations to the Governor on strategies the State could undertake to facilitate more effective and comprehensive immigrant integration. We recognize that many of our recommendations rely heavily on collaboration and partnership between the State, community institutions, private non-profit agencies, philanthropic organizations, and local governments to successfully implement these integration strategies.

Proposed areas of focus from the Executive Order included strategies to help legal permanent residents become naturalized; acquisition of English language skills integral to the process of becoming citizens; ways to recognize or transfer the skills, certifications and professional credentials people earn in other countries into Washington's economy; strategies that are needed to support the success for naturalization, English language acquisition and recognition or transference of certifications and professional credentials; and facilitating public-private partnerships for the integration of people seeking to become New Americans into the very fabric of our state, thus creating a more vibrant, prosperous and vital society. Policy Council members, appointed by the Governor, include business, faith, labor, law enforcement, community, philanthropic, and governmental leaders from across our state.

Washington is part of a national trend in immigration and is classified by researchers as a "new growth states." From 1990-2000, the number of foreign born in Washington increased by

90.7 percent, but from 1990-2007 Washington has seen a 147 percent increase in number of foreign born. Washington has approximately 778,501 foreign born or about 12.2 percent of the state's population. Today, Washington is tenth in the nation for size of the foreign born population, fifteenth in percentage of total population, fifth for refugee resettlement, and second for secondary migration of refugees. Washington's immigrants are extremely diverse, coming largely from Latin America (31.2 percent) and Asia (39.1 percent).

The reality of the State's budget deficit and the economic recession weighed heavily on the Policy Council at each meeting. We took both the State's serious economic situation and our duties as a Council seriously and worked to prioritize the best of many recommendations we considered. We specifically set criteria for ourselves that the recommendations we advocated in this report would meet one or more of the following criteria to be included:

1. Cross cutting initiatives that would yield benefits for multiple sectors
2. Areas where public dollars could be leveraged by private or federal dollars.
3. Initiatives that place a high value in building trust and engaging immigrant communities.
4. Low cost initiatives that have an impact on immigrant integration.

After deliberations, the Policy Council chose to focus its recommendations in the select areas of:

- Implement a Statewide Campaign for English Language Learning;
- Support and Encourage Citizenship;
- Establish Sources of Centralized, "One Stop" Information for Immigrants and Refugees;
- Enhance Language Access;
- Promote Cross-Cultural Community Safety;
- Provide Immigrant and Refugee Professionals Pathways for Career Re-Entry;
- Celebrate Washington's Diverse Immigrant Communities; and

► Advocate Actively on Key Federal Issues that Relate to Immigrant Integration.

The following recommendations came from Policy Council members with many diverse perspectives and experiences, but who were unanimous in the desire to help integrate immigrants into our communities as positively and quickly as possible.

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Implement a Statewide Campaign for English Language Learning

The Policy Council believes that English Language Acquisition is perhaps the most important tool for both economic and cultural immigrant integration. Learning English increases immigrants' earning power and enhances their participation in their communities by enabling immigrants to access information and services and more smoothly communicate with their neighbors, children's teachers, and law enforcement. According to the 2007 American Community Survey, there are 384,647 foreign born in Washington who speak English less than very well. The Policy Council believes there is a tremendous opportunity to address this gap through an innovative public-private partnership between state government, business, educators, labor unions, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, foundations, service providers and immigrant advocates to create, fund, and implement a three-year campaign to promote English Language Acquisition.

The campaign would have three core goals: 1) expand services to immigrants, with particular focus on expanding Levels One and Two instruction and ensuring diversity of location that enables immigrants to access services (workplaces, community centers close to immigrant neighborhoods, etc.); 2) promote innovative partnerships between community colleges and service providers or business to pilot programs that more effectively reach immigrants; and 3) launch an effective and coordinated ethnic media campaign to reach immigrants and ensure they understand the new opportunities for English Language Acquisition.

Leveraging public-private partnerships, Washington will become a national leader in providing English literacy programs for immigrants in workplaces, schools, and community centers. We will use innovative technology to reach across Washington, fill in gaps in infrastructure in

Eastern Washington, and reach immigrants in their homes and workplaces.

- ❶ **The Policy Council recommends private and public funding of a three-year “We Want to Learn English” campaign to prioritize English Language Acquisition. The Policy Council is still working on the details of this proposal and will present a more detailed plan in January 2010. The campaign should prioritize:**

SUBREC | Acquiring public-private funding.

SUBREC | Utilizing innovative strategies such as long-distance learning; collaborations between community colleges and nonprofit service providers that focus on determining pathways between Level One (L1) and Level Two (L2) ESL classes and community colleges; workplace English Language programs; and paid apprenticeship programs that combine English Language Learning with job training.

SUBREC | Encouraging public institutions and businesses to offer ELL employees 3-5 hours a week of paid time to attend English class. The immigrant employee would be required to match the hours spent in the classroom during non-work hours. Private employers could obtain some form of tax credit for the course of the campaign for participating. The State could mandate this employee benefit policy for State employees.

SUBREC | Expanding opportunities to engage in combined basic education, ESL, and workforce education to high Level Two ELLs who are motivated to work and have appropriate job skills.

SUBREC | Expanding adult literacy programs that provide training, resources, and information and referral to literacy training programs. These adult literacy programs should be available at community colleges, churches, temples, mosques, community centers, and other places where refugees and immigrants access services and spend time.

SUBREC | Implementing a coordinated and effective media campaign to reach out to immigrants and non-immigrants on the push for English Language Acquisition.

SUBREC | Exploring ways that financial assistance can be provided to all who enroll in community college and university English language programs.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

Support and Encourage Citizenship

In Washington State, there are approximately 160,000 legal permanent residents eligible for citizenship, but who have not yet naturalized because of barriers such as cost; access to services; lack of information; no notification of eligibility; or feelings of fear or intimidation of the process. Promoting citizenship by providing information and services across the state for eligible immigrants is one of the most effective ways of integrating immigrants and building stable families and communities.

A recent editorial from the New York Times emphasizing the benefits of citizenship described the need well: "Turning immigrants into Americans is a mission tied intimately to this country's self-interest and identity, if not its very soul."¹ One of the biggest barriers to naturalizing has been the fees to file for citizenship (\$675/person, not including legal costs). Because the most vulnerable people generally qualify for fee waivers, those just above the limit but who are still very low-income have the most difficulty, making citizenship just out of reach of many working poor families.

- 1 **The Policy Council recommends maintaining and expanding funding for naturalization services, with specific priority to expanding services to additional locations in non-urban centers and Eastern Washington, as well as adding civic engagement/citizenship classes.**

Investing dollars in innovative citizenship programs also positions Washington to receive additional Federal funds that appear likely to support citizenship and leverage State dollars.

- 1 **The Policy Council recommends reducing economic barriers to naturalization by providing a variety of opportunities for eligible permanent residents to obtain their citizenship filing fee through employer support or savings and loan programs. These could include:**

SUBREC | Encouraging State public institutions to give legal permanent residents who are eligible to naturalize 3-5 hours a week of paid time to work towards naturalization by enrolling in a citizenship exam prep or English class. The State should mandate this employee benefit policy for State employees.

SUBREC | Instituting tax credits for businesses that help immigrants obtain citizenship by providing citizenship filing fee bonuses for employees.

SUBREC | Encouraging business to work with unions to include employee benefits around citizenship into labor contracts.

SUBREC | Encouraging the Department of Commerce and credit unions, regional banks and non-profit micro-credits to work with naturalization programs to provide loans for citizenship fees to New Americans.

- 1 **The Policy Council recommends directing the State's Department of Commerce to expand the Individual Development Account program (IDA) to include saving for citizenship fees.**

Currently, the IDA program helps low-income individuals and families save, invest and make purchases to better their lives through: purchasing their first home, obtaining post-secondary education or purchasing assistive technology for work-related needs. The Policy Council proposes expanding the IDA to include saving for citizenship fees. This is currently being done in San Francisco and would be a cost-effective way to make a difference immediately in a tight budget year.

- 1 **The Policy Council recommends funding a study on the impact of naturalization on immigrant integration as a whole, including on the impact on wages and asset building.** This would track the effect of naturalization on upward mobility and integration of New Americans over time, an area where not much research exists.

RECOMMENDATION THREE

Establish Sources of Centralized, "One Stop" Information for Immigrants and Refugees

While navigating institutions can be a challenge for anyone, language barriers, unfamiliarity with government services, fear of government and enforcement or negative experiences with government in their country of origin, can make interacting with government intimidating for immigrants. One of the largest barriers that prevent immigrants from accessing institutions is a lack of information.

- 1 **The Policy Council recommends that the State fund a series of strategies to provide "one stop" information to immigrants. We propose that this be a three-pronged approach, for the short-, medium-, and long-term. Specifically, we recommend:**

SUBREC I In the short-term, establishing a very simple, multi-lingual website that provides important information and links to resources and benefits. This should be a well-designed, attractive, and simple site that is easy to navigate. It can include links to existing resources and programs (such as those available through the Seattle Public Library site). Informational materials might address:

- o *How to access existing health care services, the State Family Assistance program, and Washington Basic Health*
- o *Community and personal safety topics such as child safety seats, bicycle safety, internet crimes, scams*
- o *Information on banking and credit*
- o *Rights of immigrants including information on deportation and rights if a family member is detained*
- o *Specific information on certification or licensing for high growth industries in Washington and a career guide for immigrant professionals*
- o *Programs, resources or trainings available for immigrants looking to start small businesses*

SUBREC I In the short- and medium-term, directing the State to hold mobile resource fairs or Welcoming Center days in high-density immigrant areas across the state, similar to Illinois.

SUBREC I In the short-term, conducting a feasibility study for creating a physical welcome center, and, in the medium- to long-term, working to allocate funds for a physical welcome center.

- ❶ **The Policy Council also recommends that the Office of the Attorney General provide more multilingual information and conduct active outreach to different immigrant communities on their services, particularly focusing on areas of credit, payday lending, mortgages, notaries and other scams.**

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

Enhance Language Access

Language barriers prevent many English Language Learners (ELLs) from interacting effectively with medical institutions and government agencies. Without translated documents and oral interpretation, ELL community members “are less likely to understand and exercise their rights and obligations, less

able to access government services, and less able to achieve economic stability.” While it is crucial to offer opportunities to learn English, at the same time language access services must be provided to ensure that language barriers do not limit the ability of immigrants to integrate into their communities. Further, our state (any program or agency that receives Federal funds) has an obligation to provide language access. It is equally important that smaller agencies and programs across the state that do not receive Federal funds are also encouraged and provided with assistance to create language access plans.

- ❶ **The Policy Council recommends that the Governor sign a Language Access Executive Order that requires all state agencies to assess their abilities to communicate with ELLs.** Each agency will name a language access coordinator who will develop and implement a plan that provides language assistance, such as use of bilingual staff (including assignment pay for bilingual ability), telephone interpretation, oral or written translation services, and translation of important public documents, in at least those languages that are spoken by five percent or more of the state’s population. The Executive Order can also direct agencies to provide signage in agencies and courts and other important places to ensure that ELL individuals know they have the right to free translation. In unveiling the Executive Order, the Governor can also urge city and county agencies to make similar assessments and create language access plans.

SUBREC I (medium term): Establish an Office of Language Access to ensure compliance with the law and to provide technical assistance.

- ❶ **The Policy Council also recommends that the current DSHS interpreter brokerage system-certification testing should be reviewed to balance English proficiency and target language proficiency and then expanded to be available to other agencies.**

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

Promote Cross-Cultural Community Safety

The Policy Council believes that keeping communities safe is an important part of ensuring successful integration, and that trust between law enforcement and communities is essential to ensuring community safety. Some communities absorbing new immigrants may have tension or fear that immigrants

bring crime, a misconception that has been debunked by extensive research across the country and actual experiences in places such as Pasco, Washington. Many immigrants, at the same time, are afraid to report crimes and initiate contact with law enforcement. Research shows that language barriers, cultural misperceptions, and fear of deportation lead to under-reporting of crimes and avoidance of police.

1 The Policy Council recommends that the Washington State Sheriffs Association (WSSA) and Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) develop a model policy for building trust and fostering cross-cultural relations. This policy should include:

SUBREC | Creation of a Language Access Plan.

SUBREC | Development of an organizational self-assessment tool to measure cultural and linguistic competency and assist law enforcement agencies in reviewing their administrative capacity to work effectively with recently arrived immigrant populations.

SUBREC | A requirement that local police regularly work with and seek the opinions of immigrant community leaders/ community liaisons through the formation and use of an immigrant advisory board or working group.

SUBREC | Creation of a working group to create a model policy on bilingual recruitment and retention.

SUBREC | Availability of small stipends for language training for monolingual officers.

SUBREC | Pay differentials for bilingual employees.

SUBREC | Standard training, incorporated into existing requirements, for new sheriffs and police officers on cultural awareness, racial profiling, and building trust with immigrant communities.

SUBREC | Information outreach to the immigrant community by all law enforcement personnel (not just a department within the agency), conducted using materials in the immigrant's native language that explain community values, personal safety, scams, how to contact law enforcement and what to expect, local and state government, court process, child safety seats, bicycle safety, etc. These publications should be available at the Welcoming Center website (See Recommendation Three).

SUBREC | Conduct citizen academies that explain the inner workings of the law enforcement agency to help immigrant community members become familiar with how police officers

perform their duties and how the department serves the community.

1 The Policy Council recommends that the Governor convene a group of immigration advocates, law enforcement officials, and community members to develop model policies that prohibit state law enforcement agencies from inquiring about immigration status except in very limited circumstances. The Council also recommends that the Governor support the adoption of these policies at the local level in counties and cities across the state.

The issue of fear in immigrant and refugee communities of law enforcement, including perceptions of racial profiling, emerged many times during our deliberations. The Policy Council believes it is essential to address community perception of law enforcement as well as to ensure that law enforcement operate under guidelines and model policies to prevent racial profiling or other activities that undermine trust. Establishing standard policies and procedures that keep the distinction clear between local law enforcement and federal immigration agents is one component to maintaining trust and reducing fear.

1 The Policy Council recommends that the State launch a campaign or public education sessions to ensure that immigrant and refugee communities, law enforcement officials and state agencies are aware of U-visas and for the State to support efforts to facilitate increased access by community members to U-visas, which offer humanitarian protections when immigrants are victims of crime.

1 The Policy Council recommends that the State ensure that state-issued identification documents be accessible to immigrants—including undocumented immigrants—and refugees in order to ensure community safety. The Policy Council also urges the Governor to work with the Department of Licensing (DOL) to ensure compliance with the agency's no-discrimination policy and to also ensure consistent and fair treatment by DOL offices that serve high numbers of immigrants.

SUBREC | The Policy Council endorses Washington's policy of allowing all state residents to apply for driver licenses without requiring proof of lawful presence.

SUBREC | The January 2009 Department of Licensing Revised Standards and Procedures should be reviewed to see if the

new procedures have impacted the ability of refugees and undocumented immigrants to obtain driver licenses and, if necessary, the standards should be amended to embody a policy that ensures that refugees and undocumented immigrants are still able to access driver licenses. The recent changes deleted 34 previously accepted documents (and added four I.D. documents).

RECOMMENDATION SIX

Provide Immigrant and Refugee Professionals Pathways for Career Re-Entry

Many foreign-born residents of Washington State come to the United States with remarkable experience, skills, and often substantial professional careers behind them. Many hold advanced degrees in the fields of medicine, nursing, engineering, teaching, or other such professional fields. When they arrive, unfortunately, these professionals face numerous barriers to transferring their education, training or certifications to the U.S. marketplace, including institutional barriers around licensing procedures.

States have a tremendous amount of power in regard to professional licensing and providing legal immigrant and refugee professionals pathways for career re-entry. Recognizing the indispensable contributions of Washington's immigrant workforce to our state's economy, the Policy Council urges the State to reap the skill opportunities that professional foreign trained immigrants bring our state by facilitating pathways for career re-entry.

- ❶ **The Policy Council recommends that Washington State assist highly-educated and high-skilled immigrants and refugees to enter the workforce at a professional level through a variety of strategies including:**

SUBREC | Compiling and making available region-specific information on job availability, wage rates, and clear, easy-to-understand instructions on how to acquire licensing, certifications, and credentials.

SUBREC | Expanding funding for projects that assist health care professionals and other needed professions.

SUBREC | Through the Governor's leadership, directing licensing boards and the State Apprenticeship Council to create work groups of professionals in high priority fields to determine how requirements for state licensing for specific

occupations can be altered to maintain the high standards promoted by licensing but ensure the utilization of skilled immigrants with previous training. This could include a pilot program such as the one proposed during the Tacoma hearing, where foreign professionals could spend a certain amount of time "apprenticing" to a trained professional in shortage areas. If completed satisfactorily, that apprenticeship could serve as part of the necessary requirements to obtain credentials to practice.

SUBREC | Encourage a partnership between the State and universities or community colleges to create an educational program similar to the Cuban school (see box in report) for skilled immigrants and refugees to help them transition into their trained fields.

SUBREC | Include a career guide for immigrant professionals as part of the proposed Welcoming Center website (see Recommendation Three).

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN

Celebrate Washington's Diverse Immigrant Communities

The diversity represented by immigrants is a source of joy and pride for Washington communities. Events that bring entire communities together—immigrant and non-immigrant—and recognize the value of the diversity in the global economy and community are empowering and build community.

- ❶ **The Policy Council recommends that the State establish key days or dates for celebration of immigrants in the State of Washington: specifically, we propose celebrating the September 17th Citizenship Day and June 20th World Refugee Day.**

SUBREC | The Policy Council recommends that the Governor make a media proclamation tied to citizenship day that celebrates the contributions of immigrants to Washington State. New citizens from all over the world, proud to be Americans, could be highlighted. These celebration days can also be used as vehicles for getting important messages out to immigrants.

- ❶ **The Policy Council recommends that the State identify existing state campaigns that can allocate resources to a sub-media campaign that highlights the benefits immigrants and refugees bring to our state.** This media

campaign could highlight prominent immigrant leaders and contributors, as well as new immigrants and refugees who are eager to enrich our community.

SUBREC | The Policy Council recommends the use of immigrant/refugee faces and stories in state materials that are used in media campaigns, including state websites, posters, tourism, etc. to reflect the diversity of our population.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT

Advocate Actively on Key Federal Issues that Relate to Immigrant Integration

As the Policy Council considered how the State could best integrate immigrants it became clear that while there is much that can be done on a state level, some of the biggest opportunities to further immigrant integration must be advanced at the federal level. It is important for states, including Washington, to advocate actively for changes in federal policy that negatively impact the State's ability to effectively integrate immigrants. For example, states do not have jurisdiction around federal immigration policies that determine who comes in to the United States and who stays here, but the effects of a failed immigration system are clearly felt at the state level by immigrant families, service providers, and key businesses for the State's economy, including agriculture and high-tech. How to integrate immigrants who lack status is one of our state's biggest challenges. As the State begins the work of implementing the Policy Council's recommendations, pieces of federal legislation that provide dollars for health care, ESL classes, naturalization, and adult basic education provide crucial resources for the task at hand.

When federal legislation so clearly impacts our state, the Policy Council recommends that the Governor engage actively in that discussion.

- 1 **The Policy Council recommends that the Governor continue to publicly support and advocate for federal comprehensive immigration reform, working in closer coordination with coalitions of business, labor, faith and immigrant groups to enact successful comprehensive immigration reform.** The Governor should support comprehensive immigration reform that promotes the reunification of families, provides legal status to undocumented individuals with a path to earned citizenship, addresses current and future worker flows, provides due process and civil

liberty protections, and encourages immigrant integration. The country needs legislation to enable employers to legally hire needed immigrant workers and that protects all workers, regardless of immigration status, from mistreatment by employers. Legislation must also support the full integration of immigrants by providing immigrants with quality English instruction, naturalization assistance, and opportunities to move up the economic ladder. Legislation should also provide legalization for students who came to this country as children and graduated from a U.S. high school, currently known as the DREAM Act.

- 1 **The Policy Council recommends that the Governor work to ensure that immigrants have access to healthcare as part of federal healthcare reform.** Specifically the Governor should advocate lifting the five year bar on federal healthcare benefits for legal permanent residents, qualifying these legal immigrants for programs like Medicaid and bringing in additional dollars to the State.
- 1 **The Policy Council recommends that the Governor support and advocate for Strengthen and Unite Communities with Civics Education and English Skills (SUCCESS) Act of 2009,** which recognizes the growing need for English literacy, U.S. history and civics education for immigrants.
- 1 **The Policy Council recommends that the Governor advocate for the Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization, specifically for a revised funding formula** that includes English Language Learner adults with a high school degree or higher.

RECOMMENDATION NINE

Continue the New Americans Policy Council

In this report the Policy Council has presented a wide range of recommendations and a plan for immigrant integration that can be implemented in the coming months and coming years. We have prioritized recommendations that would make a tremendous impact on immigrant integration and would increase the economic contributions of immigrants to our state. However, immigrant integration has many important component areas for which we simply did not have enough time or research to make final recommendations. We heard important testimony and began research in these areas but did not have sufficient time to complete recommendations. We

believe that several of these areas demand the State's attention and would benefit from the same Policy Council continuing its work for an additional year. This continuation would also give the Council the opportunity to work with state agency representatives to further develop and/or implement some of the recommendations.

- ❶ **The Policy Council recommends that the Governor continue the New Americans Policy Council to work with state agencies to implement year one recommendations and to address four primary topics including: Economic Development including Immigrant Access to Credit, Asset Building, and Immigrant Entrepreneurs; Worker Protections; Housing (homelessness to home ownership) and Safety Net Services; and Language Access and other issues in Courts and Medical Settings.**

The Council believes that we all benefit when Washington's immigrants work at their highest potential and engage responsibly in their communities and workplaces. In this framework, the public, private, and nonprofit sectors have an important opportunity to invest in assisting immigrants in the process of their integration so that we can bring them fully into our economy and our community, for the benefit of all. Historically and currently, the United States has flourished as a rich and diverse nation, embracing immigrants from all over the world who moved to our country to escape persecution and war, experience the freedoms and rights of a democratic society, better the lives of their families, contribute to the economy, and become naturalized citizens. The state of Washington continues to benefit and prosper from the cultural diversity, work ethic, and economic contribution that a diverse population has contributed to our state.

As Washington's foreign-born population increases, investing in the strategies recommended in this document will help ensure Washington State's vitality and well-being. Washington will continue its legacy as a state that cherishes, welcomes, helps integrate its immigrants into society, and sustains its diverse population and the economic growth resulting from that diversity.

This report and its recommendations reflect these beliefs. We call for state leadership to establish a new alliance of

employers, philanthropy, nonprofits and local governments to collaboratively implement these recommendations, including funding. We hope this report constitutes a fresh start for our dialogue on immigration that focuses on constructive solutions for a successful future.

NEW AMERICANS POLICY COUNCIL

Elizabeth Dunbar, *Chair, Tacoma* – Tacoma Community House
 Pramila Jayapal, *Vice Chair, Seattle* – OneAmerica
 Gilberto Mendoza, *Vice Chair, Pasco* – Small business owner
 Akhtar Badshah, *Redmond* – Microsoft
 Jorge L. Barón, *Seattle* – Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
 Dmitri Chaban, *Spokane* – World Relief Spokane
 Luis Fraga, *Seattle* – University of Washington
 Troy Hutson, *Seattle* – Economic Services Administration at the Department of Social and Health Services
 Ken Irwin, *Yakima* – Yakima County Sheriff
 Jeff Johnson, *Olympia* – Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO
 Van Dinh-Kuno, *Mukilteo* – Refugee and Immigrant Services Northwest
 Hilary Pennington, *Seattle* – Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
 Michael Ramos, *Seattle* – Church Council of Greater Seattle
 Rick Sawyer, *Seattle* – UNITE HERE Local 8
 Ezra Teshome, *Seattle* – State Farm Insurance

INTRODUCTION

IN FEBRUARY 2008, GOVERNOR CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE signed the Executive Order establishing the Washington New Americans Policy Council to “make recommendations on topics including but not limited to: strategies to help legal permanent residents become naturalized; acquisition of English language skills integral to the process of becoming citizens; ways to recognize or transfer the skills, certifications and professional credentials people earn in other countries into Washington’s economy; strategies that are needed to support the success for naturalization, English language acquisition and recognition or transference of certifications and professional credentials; facilitating public-private partnerships for the integration of people seeking to become New Americans into the very fabric of our state, thus creating a more vibrant, prosperous and vital society.”

The Policy Council represents Washington geographically, politically, and ethnically, with strong participation from business, labor, law enforcement, faith, and immigrant organizations. The Policy Council set goals for itself: to research, consider, and prioritize issues related to integrating immigrants into our society; to research other states’ immigration plans/reports; and to strategize and make recommendations to the Governor regarding effective strategies for immigrant integration that should be implemented, continued or expanded.

Historically and currently, the United States has flourished as a rich and diverse nation, embracing immigrants from all over the world who moved to our country to escape persecution and war, experience the freedoms and rights of a democratic society, better the lives of their families, contribute to the economy, and become naturalized citizens. The state of Washington continues to benefit and prosper from the cultural diversity, work ethic, and economic contribution that a diverse population has contributed to our state.

Over one million Washingtonians speak a language other than English at home, and Washington has 160,000 legal permanent residents currently eligible to be naturalized as U.S. citizens. Immigrants are part of our social and economic fabric and have been throughout history. The issue of immigration is tied deeply to our state’s workforce and family needs. One in five Washington children is an immigrant or has at least one

immigrant parent. Immigrants are 14 percent of our workforce and Washington relies on immigrant workers to contribute to our economy in a host of industries and occupations: from apple picking to researching new cancer treatments. Further, immigrants contribute to our economy as taxpayers, consumers, and business owners.

The diversity represented by immigrants is a source of joy and pride for Washington communities. As part of the global economy, Washington benefits from the talents, contributions, resilience, hard work, entrepreneurialism, and skills of people who come to this country. At the same time, the same diversity requires that immigrants and host communities, as well as public, private and philanthropic partners recognize that there must be intentional strategies developed and implemented to reach and assist immigrants to make their full contributions. Language barriers, unfamiliarity with cultural and social customs, fear left from coming from repressive states, lack of education or knowledge about immigrants from mainstream communities, and many other issues contribute to the challenges that immigrants face to building strong and healthy lives. It is therefore imperative that a deliberate and comprehensive approach is developed that recognizes these challenges and works to build trust, encourage understanding of civic responsibility, and ensure access to information.

As Washington’s foreign-born population increases, investing in these strategies will help ensure Washington State’s vitality and well-being. Washington will continue its legacy as a welcoming state that helps integrate its immigrants into society, and sustains its diverse population and the economic growth resulting from that diversity.

Integration is a complex, multifaceted, interconnected, and ongoing enterprise. Manuel Pastor, Director of the Center for Immigrant Integration at University of Southern California, defines successful immigrant integration as economic mobility for immigrants, civic participation by immigrants, and receiving society’s openness to immigrants. As such, immigrant integration requires more than just citizenship and a voter registration card, it must also include: training and employment at one’s highest potential; the ability to communicate in English; the opportunity to increase personal wealth through greater access to mainstream financial services; and the ability

to meaningfully engage ones' government. The Policy Council recognizes that successful integration is a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure vibrant and cohesive communities. As an intentional effort, integration engages and transforms all community members, reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

While government cannot and should not do everything, the State has a critical role as a convener for the public interest, fostering collaboration and reform among stakeholders. Washington State has many promising practices in immigrant integration but can also learn from other states that have made admirable strides towards fully integrating New Americans. Illinois, for example, has developed a Welcoming Center for immigrants, improved citizenship rates, and has established a Cabinet-level office for New Americans. New Jersey has placed immigrant integration and cultural competency on the front burner of state agencies, and has made strong arguments for making educational institutions work better for immigrant children, regardless of legal status. Pennsylvania has shown tremendous leadership in attracting and re-credentialing foreign-trained professionals to bolster their workforce shortfalls and help these immigrants excel in their specialized fields. Other states such as Maryland and Massachusetts have also shown leadership and innovation for immigrant integration. We have studied reports from these states and looked for the best ideas to be replicated in our state.

This report builds on the best thinking and successes of other states with our own unique perspective. The Council believes there is a tremendous opportunity to address the successful integration of immigrants into our society through innovative public-private partnerships between state government, business, educators, labor unions, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, foundations, service providers and immigrant advocates. Central to this belief is the responsibility of immigrants to help themselves and the need for investment of state, private and nonprofit resources, partnerships and dollars to ensure this effective immigrant integration.

Based on data that was reviewed, best practices from around the country, testimony provided from residents across the state,

and information from experts in different fields, the Policy Council has chosen to focus its recommendations in select areas including: Implement a Statewide Campaign for English Language Learning; Support and Encourage Citizenship; Establish Sources of Centralized, "One Stop" Information for Immigrants and Refugees; Enhance Language Access; Promote Cross-Cultural Community Safety; Provide Immigrant and Refugee Professionals Pathways for Career Re-Entry; Celebrate Washington's Diverse Immigrant Communities; and Advocate Actively on Key Federal Issues that Relate to Immigrant Integration.

The reality of the State's budget deficit and the economic recession weighed heavily on the Policy Council at each meeting. We recognize that it is an extremely difficult time and that the budget will be tight for years to come. We took both the State's serious economic situation and our duties as a Council seriously and worked to prioritize the best of many recommendations we considered. We specifically set criteria for ourselves that the recommendations we advocated in this report would meet one or more of the following criteria to be included:

1. Cross cutting initiatives that would yield benefits for multiple sectors
2. Areas where public dollars could be leveraged by private or federal dollars.
3. Initiatives that place a high value in building trust and engaging immigrant communities
4. Low cost initiatives that have an impact on immigrant integration.

We believe that investments in these areas as articulated in the report will yield tremendous results that benefit all Washingtonians, even as the State struggles with its current economic situation.

DEMOGRAPHICS

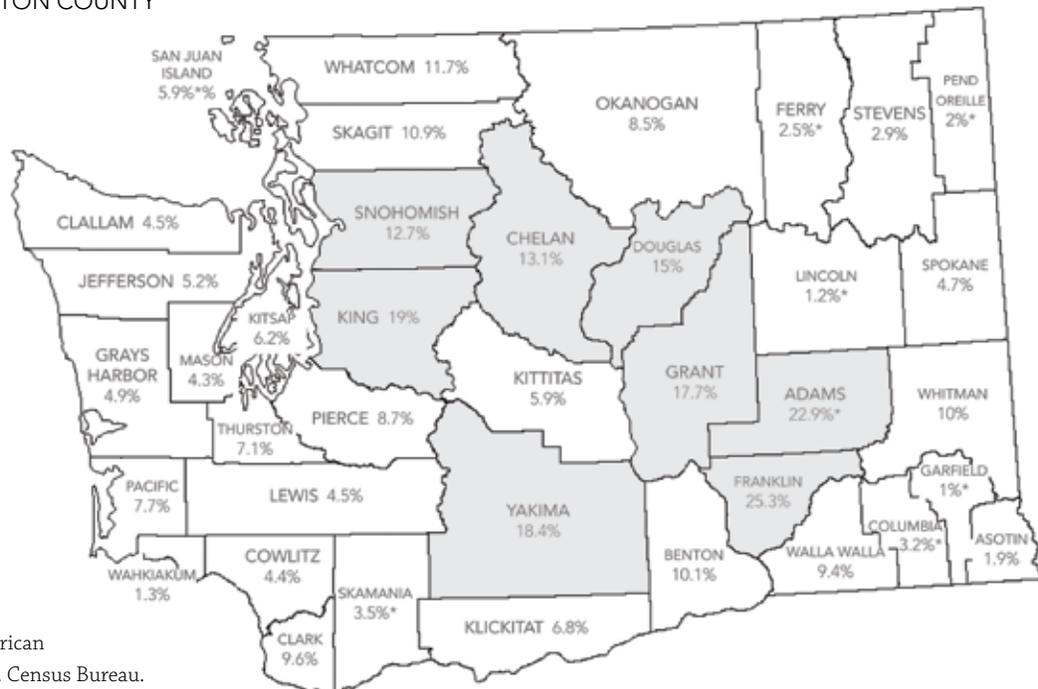
WASHINGTON IS PART OF A NATIONAL TREND in immigration. In 1990, 75 percent of all immigrants lived in just six states: California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey. By 1999, the distribution of immigrants changed profoundly, impacting the entire country. In one decade the overall percentage of immigrants dropped 66 percent, while 22 other states saw their foreign born population increase by over 90 percent in the same decade.²

Washington is one of these “new growth states.” From 1990-2000, the number of foreign born in Washington increased by 90.7 percent, but from 1990-2007 Washington has seen a 147 percent increase in number of foreign born. Washington has approximately 778,501 foreign born or about 12.2 percent of the state’s population.

Today, Washington is:

- > Tenth in Size of the foreign born population, 2007³
- > Fifteenth in Percentage of total population, 2007⁴
- > Twelfth in Numeric change in the foreign-born population, 2000 to 2007⁵
- > Tenth in Size of the foreign-born, limited English proficient (LEP) population, 2007⁶
- > Ninth in Number of the foreign-born population living in poverty, 2007⁷
- > Eleventh in Number of foreign-born, civilian employed workers, 2007⁸
- > Fifth for refugee resettlement⁹
- > Second for secondary migration of refugees¹⁰

PERCENT OF FOREIGN BORN IN EACH WASHINGTON COUNTY



Source: 2005-2007 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.
 | Note: *Census 2000 (ACS 2005-2007 was not available for all counties)

Washington’s immigrants are extremely diverse, coming largely from Latin America (31.2 percent) and Asia (39.1 percent). In 2007, the top three countries of birth of the foreign born in Washington were Mexico, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Of the total immigrant population in Washington in 2007, 26.3 percent were born in Mexico, 7.0 percent in the Philippines, and 6.4 percent in Vietnam.

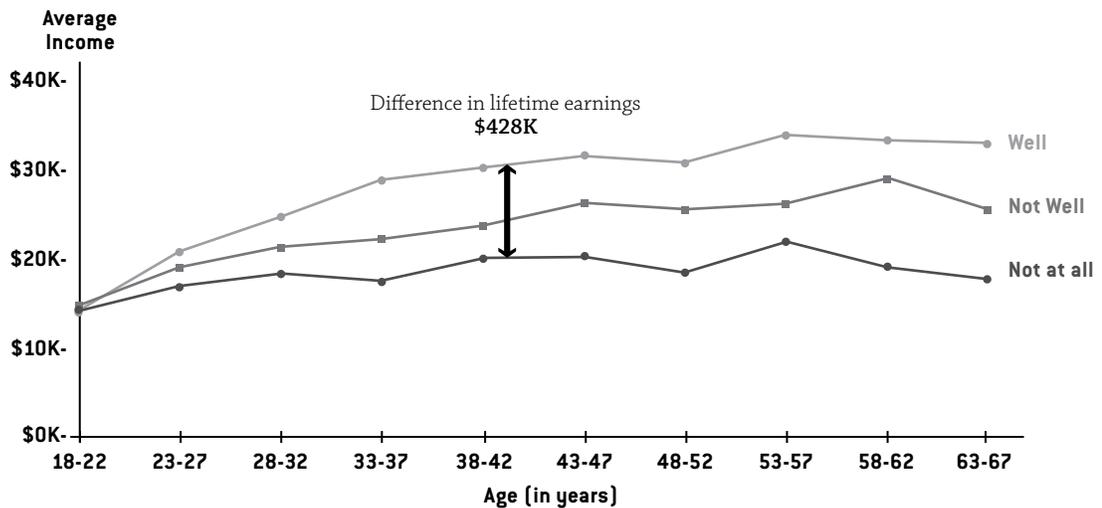
A national trend has seen immigrants move further from cities. The 2000 Census shows that immigrants across the country were moving further away from inner city areas that had established immigrant services and into the suburbs. This has intensified the effects of immigration and the need for services to be distributed across a large region.¹¹ Counties with limited or non-existent immigrant services are left to forge their own paths to successfully integrate new immigrants into education, mental and public health facilities, and social services. Washington’s immigrants constitute significant portions of many counties across the state, demonstrating clearly the need for state guidance on immigrant integration.

The largest percentages of foreign born are in (decreasing order): Franklin, Adams, King, Yakima, Grant, Douglas, Chelan, and Snohomish. All of these counties have a higher percentage than the national average (12.5 percent) of foreign born.

MULTILINGUAL WASHINGTON

According to the American Community Survey 2008 data, approximately 1,021,304 people across Washington speak a language besides English at home and slightly over half of them speak English less than very well. About 464,785 people or 7.6 percent of Washington’s population speaks English less than very well and could be considered Limited English Proficient (LEP). (It is important to note here that we use Limited English Proficient (LEP) when referring to data from the American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau. In all other parts of this report, we refer to English Language Learners (ELL), a term which includes people with no or minimal English language skills all the way to the highest levels of

LIFETIME EARNING POTENTIAL OF TARGET POPULATIONS (with HS degree)



Source: (2009) *Improving Outcomes for Limited English Proficient Adults in the US*. Prepared for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation by the Parthenon Group.

English language learning.) This data could provide a baseline number for the amount of people who require language access services. Estimates suggest that slightly less than 10 percent of English Language Learners are enrolled in classes, suggesting an unmet need of 90 percent.¹² This number also demonstrates the number of individuals who might be able to move up the ladder and contribute more to the economy if they were able to access English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

National-level data shows that helping ELLS increase their proficiency level can make a huge difference in their lifetime earnings—from \$386,000-\$428,000 depending on their educational attainment. (see figures below)

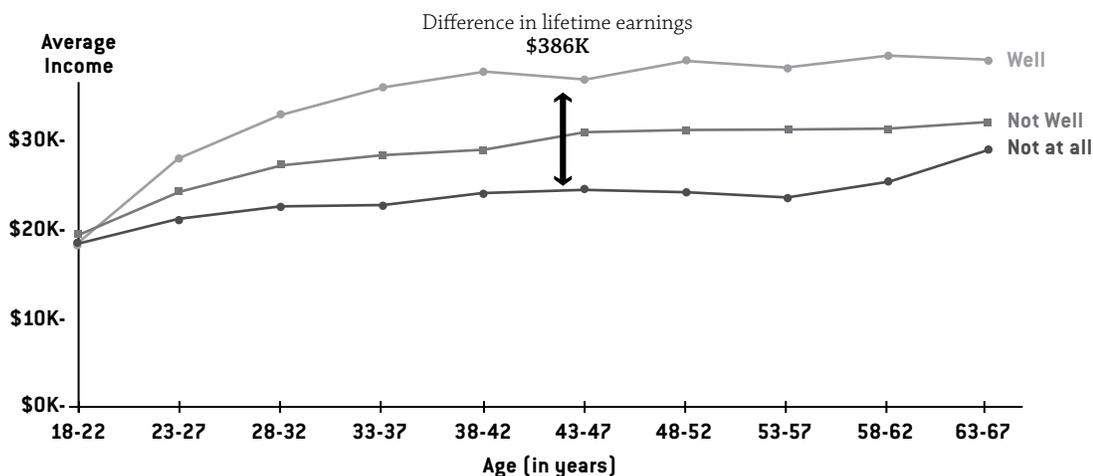
The number of Washingtonians who would benefit from ESL training has dramatically increased since 1990. From 1990-2007, the number of LEP individuals over the age of five in Washington has increased 180.2 percent or by 299,470 individuals.

According to American Community Survey 2005-2007 pooled data, about 4.2 percent of all households in Washington are in linguistic isolation; no one in the household above the age of 14 speaks English very well. People who speak a language besides English at home are spread across the state. Many counties across Washington have significant percentages of their population who speak a language besides English at home. Franklin (46.1), Adams (43.3), Yakima (35.5), Grant (33.3), King (22.8), Chelan (19.6), and Douglas (19.5) have the highest percentages of people who speak another language at home.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF WASHINGTON'S IMMIGRANTS

According to American Community Survey, in 2007, Washington's foreign born workforce had nearly equal percentages of workers with a college degree or higher (29.0) and with less than a high school diploma (27.5), necessitating resources for both groups.

LIFETIME EARNING POTENTIAL OF TARGET POPULATIONS (less than High School)



The number of foreign-born persons in Washington with a college degree increased by 46.8 percent between 2000 and 2007 (and 122.2 percent from 1990-2000), while the number of foreign-born persons who had not completed high school increased by about 23.3 percent (and by 78.6 percent from 1990-2000).

Many of Washington's immigrant workers are "underemployed;" i.e., they have college degrees but work in occupations where their skills and previous experiences are underutilized. Data shows having a college degree does not necessarily correlate with being employed in a skilled occupation. Nationally, one in five college educated immigrants work in unskilled occupations. Across the country, approximately 21.6 percent of college-educated immigrant workers were in unskilled jobs. Overall, recently arrived Latin American and African immigrants fared worst, and a substantial number (35 percent) of Latin American immigrants who arrived some time ago were still under-employed.¹³ U.S. educated foreign born fared better than immigrants who received a college degree in their country of origin. In fact, Asian, European, and African immigrants educated in the U.S. were underemployed at equal or lower rates as U.S. born and educated workers. However, 25 percent of U.S. educated Latin Americans were still underemployed.¹⁴

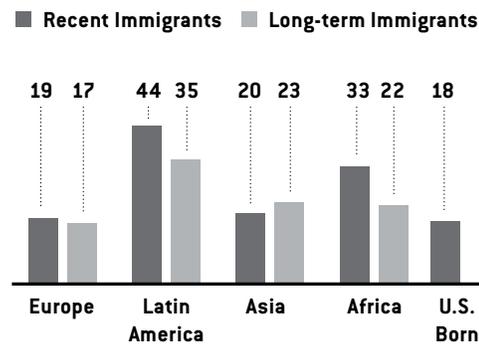
In Washington, 21.6 percent of college educated foreign born are underemployed. Additionally, nearly 5,000 college educated immigrants are unemployed, creating an "underutilized" (underemployed + unemployed), foreign born population of over 29,000. Nationally, about 1,325,778 immigrants are underutilized or about 21.9 percent of all college educated immigrants in the civilian labor force.

CITIZENSHIP

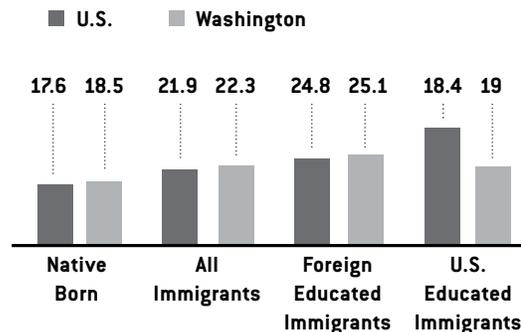
Washington has a large number of legal permanent residents eligible for naturalization, the process through which a legal permanent resident obtains citizenship. With the exception of the years following September 11 when naturalization was slowed down by increased security measures, from 1998-2007 Washington has naturalized between 11,000-15,000 people a year.

In 2008, the United States almost doubled its naturalizations from the previous year. In 2007, the U.S. as a whole naturalized

U.S. SHARE (%) OF UNDEREMPLOYED BY REGION OF ORIGIN AND ARRIVAL PERIOD



U.S. & WA SHARE (%) OF UNDERUTILIZED WORKERS OF TOTAL CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE



Source: Migration Policy Institute analysis of 2005-2006 American Community Survey. See endnotes for notes.¹⁵

660,477 New Americans, but, in 2008, 1,046,539 New Americans became U.S. citizens—an increase of 58.5 percent. This spike corresponds with coordinated citizenship campaigns around the country, excitement about the chance to vote in a presidential election, and a rise in applications filed before the citizenship application fee increase in July 2007.¹⁶

In 2008, the state of Washington saw a 27.2 percent increase in naturalizations; 18,665 New Americans became citizens in Washington compared to 14,671 in 2007. However, the increase in naturalizations in Washington was relatively small compared to some other states: MD (136 percent), VA (111 percent), PA (73 percent), CA (64 percent), and FL (135 percent). According to a 2007 Pew Hispanic report, Washington State falls below the national average (59 percent) in naturalizing eligible legal permanent residents (57 percent).¹⁷ Data from the 2005 Current Population Survey (CPS) shows that Washington State shares a rank of 40th with Arizona in rate of naturalizing eligible immigrants.¹⁸ While it is difficult to conclude what variables impacted the 2008 spike, it is clear that Washington can improve in reaching its eligible permanent residents.

➤ In 2007, only 8.6 percent of legal permanent residents in Washington eligible for naturalization became citizens. In 2008, 11.7 percent of eligible immigrants naturalized.

➤ As of 2007, approximately 160,000 legal permanent residents in Washington are eligible for citizenship.¹⁹ In 2005, about 40,000 additional legal permanent residents were soon-to-be eligible.²⁰

PART OF OUR ECONOMIC FABRIC: WORKERS, CONSUMERS, TAX PAYERS

The state of Washington is facing the same workforce challenges as almost every other state in the country. As the native born baby boomer population ages out of the workforce in greater numbers than any previous generation and the younger population pursues higher educational attainment, Washington State needs foreign born workers to complement the native born workforce across all parts of the labor spectrum.

Foreign born workers complement native born workers across all industries, but clearly provide most of the fuel to Washington's farming, fishing, and forestry industry, a major economic generator for our state. In 2005, the Washington

State Department of Agriculture estimated that the \$32 billion food and agriculture industry comprised 12 percent of the state's economy. Our state's immigrant researchers and hi-tech workers are also major contributors to the economy through their roles at Microsoft, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, and the University of Washington.²¹

Additionally, immigrants contribute to our state economy as consumers and tax payers.

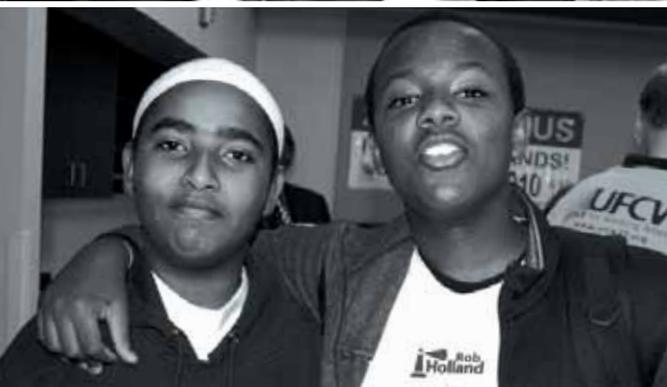
For example, Washington's Asian buying power accounted for over \$16 billion or about 6.6 percent of the state's total consumer market (\$246 billion). Nationally, Washington ranked seventh in size of Asian consumer market. From 1990-1998, Asian buying power grew 442.8 percent.²²

Washington's Hispanic buying power accounted for over \$12 billion or about 4.9 percent of the state's total consumer market. Nationally, Washington ranked 13th in size of the Hispanic consumer market. From 1990-2008, Hispanic buying power grew 494.5 percent.

Immigrants contributed \$1.48 billion in tax revenue to the Washington State economy in 2007. According to the Washington State Office of Financial Management households with at least one foreign born member paid a total of almost \$1.5 billion in taxes in 2007. The foreign born account for 13.2 percent of all taxes paid in Washington State, slightly higher than the percent of foreign born households overall (12.5).

Low income foreign born households pay the highest percent of their income to taxes—about 14.2 percent. Predictably, foreign born households who earn the most (over \$130,000) contribute the most dollars to taxes.

RECOMMENDATIONS



After deliberations, the Policy Council chose to focus its recommendations in these select areas:

- Implement a Statewide Campaign for English Language Learning;
- Support and Encourage Citizenship;
- Establish Sources of Centralized, “One Stop” Information for Immigrants and Refugees;
- Enhance Language Access;
- Promote Cross-Cultural Community Safety;
- Provide Immigrant and Refugee Professionals Pathways for Career Re-Entry;
- Celebrate Washington’s Diverse Immigrant Communities; and
- Advocate Actively on Key Federal Issues that Relate to Immigrant Integration.

The following recommendations came from Policy Council members with many diverse perspectives and experiences, but who were unanimous in the desire to help integrate immigrants into our communities as positively and quickly as possible.

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Implement Statewide Campaign for English Language Learning

THE POLICY COUNCIL BELIEVES that English Language Acquisition is perhaps the most important tool for both economic and cultural integration. Learning English increases immigrants' earning power and enhances their participation in their communities by enabling immigrants to more smoothly communicate with their neighbors, children's teachers, law enforcement and access information and services. It is also true that for communities receiving immigrants, the learning of English also serves as a marker to show that immigrants are interested in responsible integration.

According to the 2007 American Community Survey, there are 384,647 foreign born in Washington who speak English less than very well. In our review and research as well as in hearing directly from community members in public testimony, we found that there is a strong desire to learn English by immigrants who lack English skills, in order to get jobs or simply function effectively in American society. Immigrants who do not speak English are far less likely than those who do speak English to advance in their jobs or to hold higher-paying jobs. In public testimony, one Tri-Cities agriprocessor shared her experience of seeing how immigrants with more substantive knowledge about the job than their English speaking counterparts are not able to progress to other jobs simply because they cannot speak the English required. She talked about workers who were left behind in the fields or on the shop floor because they need to be able to communicate with not only their co-workers but with a foreman at a plant in Ohio and business contacts in Japan or China.

One program that addresses the issue of workforce training and English skills is Washington's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program run through the community college system. I-BEST provides ESL and vocational training for many different trades—including office assistant, vehicle repair, nursing assistant, architectural drafting, welding, and manufacturing. I-BEST is innovative in that it pairs ESL and technical instructors in the classroom and that it "challenges the traditional notion that students must first complete all levels of basic education before they can begin workforce training."²³ Research from Columbia University that focuses on Washington's community colleges has shown that the "tipping point" for ESL students is one year of college credit and an earned credential; this provides about \$7,000 additional

earning power a year for these immigrants.²⁴ However, while programs that provide combined ESL and workforce training should be significantly expanded, the program is not an all-purpose solution for Washington State's workforce training and ESL needs.

There is a big gap in terms of English Language Acquisition classes that are available in our state, particularly at the lower levels, as well as the locations of services. However, trying to count the number of students who require English Language Acquisition classes is difficult; using waiting list numbers, which may count students who sign up at multiple providers, is unreliable and often these numbers waver significantly. Additionally many service providers do not maintain solid data on wait lists. While the Policy Council was unable to get definitive numbers of those on waiting lists for English Language classes across the state, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund surveyed 13 service providers in Seattle about the provision of ESL classes.²⁵ They report wait times for ESL classes in Seattle up to six months. For example, community colleges must often wait to provide services until the next enrollment period after a semester begins. Additionally, through public testimony, community colleges reported that budget cuts have reduced their ability to serve as many students as needed. NALEO reports that classes taught early in the morning or in the evening are in high demand and offsite programs that are the closest to where students live have long waiting lists—substantially higher than on-site programs. Classes that offer one-on-one assistance or combine technology skills like computer training have the highest waiting lists in the city and ESL combined with citizenship classes are in high demand. In public testimony, we heard over and over again that immigrants face countless challenges in accessing services for learning English.

In particular, throughout our state there are gaps in availability of lower level classes (Levels One and Two), specifically those that are offered out in the community (versus in a community college) and have childcare available. In addition, we heard that the services available vary dramatically by region of the state. While parts of Western Washington have strong infrastructure of providers, many parts of Eastern, Central and Southern

Washington do not. The need for an infrastructure in these areas where services are scarce is evident. As one community member testified on this subject, “Don’t forget about us out here in Eastern Washington.”

Service providers and immigrants alike testified to us about the lack of services and the need for a significant “push” to ensure that English Language Acquisition services are readily available at all levels and in convenient locations across the state.

The Policy Council believes there is a tremendous opportunity to address this gap through an innovative public-private partnership between state government, business, educators, labor unions, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, foundations, service providers and immigrant advocates to create, fund, and implement a three-year campaign to promote English Language Acquisition. We propose a three-year campaign that invests public and private funds to promote English language learning.

The campaign would have three core goals: 1) expand services to immigrants, with particular focus on expanding Levels One and Two instruction and ensuring diversity of location that enables immigrants to access services (workplaces, community centers close to immigrant neighborhoods, etc.); 2) promote innovative partnerships between community colleges and service providers or business to pilot programs that more effectively reach immigrants; and 3) launch an effective and coordinated ethnic media campaign to reach immigrants and ensure they understand the new opportunities for English Language Acquisition.

Leveraging public-private partnerships, Washington will become a national leader in providing English literacy programs for immigrants in workplaces, schools, and community centers. We will use innovative technology to reach across Washington, fill in gaps in infrastructure in Eastern Washington, and reach immigrants in their homes and workplaces.

- ❶ **The Policy Council recommends private and public funding of a three-year “We Want to Learn English” campaign to prioritize English Language Acquisition. The Policy Council is still working on the details of this proposal and will present a more detailed plan in January 2010. The campaign should prioritize:**

SUBREC | Acquiring public-private funding.

SUBREC | Utilizing innovative strategies such as long-distance learning; collaborations between community colleges and nonprofit service providers that focus on determining pathways between Level One (L1) and Level Two (L2) ESL classes and community colleges; workplace English Language programs; and paid apprenticeship programs that combine English Language Learning with job training.

SUBREC | Encouraging public institutions and businesses to offer ELL employees 3-5 hours a week of paid time to attend English class. The immigrant employee would be required to match the hours spent in the classroom during non-work hours. Private employers could obtain some form of tax credit for the course of the campaign for participating. The State could mandate this employee benefit policy for State employees.

SUBREC | Expanding opportunities to engage in combined basic education, ESL, and workforce education to high Level Two ELLs who are motivated to work and have appropriate job skills.

SUBREC | Expanding adult literacy programs that provide training, resources, and information and referral to literacy training programs. These adult literacy programs should be available at community colleges, churches, temples, mosques, community centers, and other places where refugees and immigrants access services and spend time.

SUBREC | Implementing a coordinated and effective media campaign to reach out to immigrants and non-immigrants on the push for English Language Acquisition.

SUBREC | Exploring ways that financial assistance can be provided to all who enroll in community college and university English language programs.



PROMISING PRACTICE: English Works

“We want to bring businesses to the table so more will host workplace programs. This is not a goodwill gesture – it makes good economic sense. We view it as a down payment on the future.” – Claudia Green, MIRA Director of Workforce Development/Director for English for New Bostonians.*

The Boston, MA area is on the cutting edge of providing workplace based ESL. Labor unions like Service Employees International Union (SEIU) that serve janitors and health care workers have programs of their own for their members. Additionally, many major employers including Massachusetts General Hospital and Legal Seafood have workplace ESL classes.

In 2009, English Works formalized partnerships between immigrant community leaders, labor unions, business and civic leaders, health care providers, educators, and advocates to work towards providing all Massachusetts residents English classes.

Business and civic leaders are encouraging businesses to partner in supporting ESL opportunities for English Language Learner workers, and to make these partnerships integral to their business strategy. They are reaching out to their membership, facilitating business-to-business communication, and using their own media to highlight success stories, providers and other resources. Similarly, labor groups are promoting deeper and broader engagement in ESL by union locals and pushing for contracts that support English classes. ESL students and workers are helping to identify business partners, participating in outreach and education events, and, over time, beginning to request English classes at work. Providers are reaching out to businesses that employ their students and developing their own capacity to work with businesses in new ways. The program has just begun but provides a promising practice for creating a private-public English campaign.

**Magnell, D. (2008) “Demand Outweighs Supply for State ESOL Programs.” Boston Business Journal. December 12, 2008.*

Information on English-Works is excerpted from www.English-works.org.

RECOMMENDATION TWO

Support and encourage citizenship

NATURALIZATION IS THE PROCESS through which a legal permanent resident obtains U.S. citizenship.

Naturalization and the ability to fully participate in civic life is the linchpin of U.S. society. A recent New York Times Editorial encouraging Congress to fund the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services which processes naturalization applications stated the importance of naturalization this way: “Turning immigrants into Americans is a mission tied intimate to this country’s self-interest and identity, if not its very soul.”²⁶

Naturalized citizens can engage more deeply in their communities as government employees, elected officials, and voters. While there has been little formal research that examines the impact of citizenship on a number of other markers of successful integration, migration experts generally believe that gaining citizenship is a catalyst for increased wages,²⁷ social mobility, and integration into the formal economy.

In Washington State, there are approximately 160,000 legal permanent residents eligible for citizenship,²⁸ but who have not yet naturalized because of barriers such as cost; access to services; lack of information; no notification of eligibility; or feelings of fear or intimidation of the process. Promoting citizenship by providing information and services across the state for eligible immigrants is one of the most effective ways of integrating immigrants and building stable families and communities.

One of the biggest barriers to naturalizing has been the fees to file for citizenship (\$675/person, not including legal costs). Because the most vulnerable people generally qualify for fee waivers, those just above the limit but who are still very low-income have the most difficulty, making citizenship just out of reach of many working poor families. Washington was a leader in launching a state program through DSHS’s Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) that specifically targets refugees and vulnerable populations such as the elderly and those on SSI. This program is administered by ORIA and has been in existence since April 1997 and operates through a network of subcontractors.

Because participants must qualify for the ORIA program, those who are just above the limits but are still very low-income as well as those in parts of the state not served sufficiently by the subcontractor network or where there are fewer trained immigration attorneys (such as Central and Eastern Washington) have been unable to receive services. This fact points out the need for accessible services throughout the State.

In 2008, recognizing the tremendous number of eligible legal permanent residents who have not naturalized and the economic development opportunities inherent in promoting citizenship, Washington State invested approximately \$374,000 into a new program called Washington New Americans (see box), that provides citizenship services to legal permanent residents who are eligible to naturalize and do not qualify for the ORIA program. The program also refers those on SSI to the existing ORIA program.

Other promising practices from around the country indicate that an expanded program that wraps in civic engagement through civic education and citizenship classes are an important next step. Martin Valadez, Vice President for Diversity & Research at Columbia Basin Community College, testified at a public hearing in Pasco before the Policy Council that there needs to be “not just citizenship classes but information on civic engagement.”

Recognizing the opportunities inherent in naturalization for eligible legal permanent residents, the Policy Council recommends:

- 1 **The Policy Council recommends maintaining and expanding funding for naturalization services, with specific priority to expanding services to additional locations in non-urban centers and Eastern Washington, as well as adding civic engagement/citizenship classes.**

Investing dollars in innovative citizenship programs also positions Washington to receive additional Federal funds that appear likely to support citizenship and leverage State dollars.

PROMISING PRACTICE: Washington New Americans

1 The Policy Council recommends reducing economic barriers to naturalization by providing a variety of opportunities for eligible permanent residents to obtain their citizenship filing fee through employer support or savings and loan programs. These could include:

SUBREC | Encouraging State public institutions to give legal permanent residents who are eligible to naturalize 3-5 hours a week of paid time to work towards naturalization by enrolling in a citizenship exam prep or English class. The State should mandate this employee benefit policy for State employees.

SUBREC | Instituting tax credits for businesses that help immigrants obtain citizenship by providing citizenship filing fee bonuses for employees.

SUBREC | Encouraging business to work with unions to include employee benefits around citizenship into labor contracts.

SUBREC | Encouraging the Department of Commerce and credit unions, regional banks and non-profit micro-credits to work with naturalization programs to provide loans for citizenship fees to New Americans.

1 The Policy Council recommends directing the State's Department of Commerce to expand the Individual Development Account program (IDA) to include saving for citizenship fees.

Currently, the IDA program helps low-income individuals and families save, invest and make purchases to better their lives through: purchasing their first home, obtaining post-secondary education, or purchasing assistive technology for work-related needs. The Policy Council proposes expanding the IDA to include saving for citizenship fees. This is currently being done in San Francisco and would be a cost-effective way to make a difference immediately in a tight budget year.

1 The Policy Council recommends funding a study on the impact of naturalization on immigrant integration as a whole, including on the impact on wages and asset building. This would track the effect of naturalization on upward mobility and integration of New Americans over time, an area where not much research exists.

Launched in 2008, Washington New Americans aims to reach out to the 160,000 legal permanent residents across the state who are eligible for citizenship. The program has a multilingual, interactive website, a toll-free hotline number available in 20 languages that refers callers to service providers in their area, and an extensive "I Am An American" ethnic media campaign that includes prominent and creative partnerships with entities such as Univision and other ethnic media radio and television stations across the state. The program has subcontracts with service providers across the state where service provider infrastructure exists. In addition, the program has an innovative partnership with the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) to hold mobile citizenship days across the state with free legal services in places where there is no infrastructure.

Since the media campaign and website promotes citizenship as a whole, and does not distinguish between those eligible through the Washington New Americans or ORIA program, both programs benefited with increased referrals. Referrals to the ORIA program then also meant additional federal dollars brought in for those participants who became citizens.

The results of the program in the six months of last fiscal year were excellent and show the need and the potential for reaching immigrants eligible for citizenship. For the six months of fiscal year 2008 that the program was in existence, some results included:

- 1,647 immigrants in Washington received services
- 730 naturalization applications were completed
- 342 individuals attended 12 citizenship preparation workshops
- 396 individuals attended 21 orientation workshops
- 12 Citizenship events were conducted over 3 days at 11 sites across the state, serving 751 immigrants
- 2,241 immigrants received information about the program through the multilingual toll-free hotline
- 13,754 online sessions were recorded through website analytics system
- 41,179 multilingual brochures and informational materials were distributed to immigrants across the state. Languages included English, Somali, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese and Russian
- 1,595 media buys in print, radio and television reached hundreds of thousands of Washington State residents
- 372 volunteers provided valuable in kind services, including legal services, paralegal services, interpretation and general support

In the next phase of the program, a new partnership with Gesa Credit Union will be launched, providing immigrants with affordable loans to cover citizenship fees.

In September 2009, the program was nationally recognized when it became one of only thirteen programs across the country to receive federal funding as part of a Citizenship Initiative from the Department of Homeland Security. It appears that the Obama Administration will likely continue to expand funding for such programs, which positions Washington New Americans well to continue to provide leverage for additional State dollars invested in the program.



“I want for the Policy Council to make sure that the Governor continues to budget naturalization services, moneys for people to continue ESL trainings and continue naturalization services because a lot of our people can’t afford the continuing increases of federal costs for INS fees.”

Lua PRITCHARD — Asian Pacific Islander Coalition-Tacoma Chair

“The majority of citizenship classes in King County are in Seattle . . . So when we have students that need citizenship then we have to tell them about places in Seattle . . . more immigrant groups are living in the south of King County, and that Roxbury line, that’s where we live. So it’s really important that citizenship classes be offered all over the state.”

Linda FARHEN — Tacoma Resident

RECOMMENDATION THREE

Establish Sources of Centralized, “One Stop” Information for Immigrants and Refugees

WHILE NAVIGATING INSTITUTIONS can be a challenge for anyone, language barriers, unfamiliarity with government services, fear of government and enforcement or negative experiences with government in their country of origin, can make interacting with government intimidating for immigrants. One of the largest barriers that prevent immigrants from accessing institutions is a lack of information.

The Policy Council heard over and over again in both Tacoma and Tri-Cities that while there may be many resources and programs available to immigrants, immigrants do not know about them. This is obviously a complex and multi-dimensional issue. Cities and the State are looking at promising practices such as technology that allows a person to be entered electronically once and to know what benefits they are eligible for. But what kept surfacing clearly through our deliberations and from the public hearings is the issue of how a new immigrant or even one who has been here for some time might learn about everything from the mundane (“What buses run to my work or home?”) to the complex (“What are my rights? If I call law enforcement, will they ask about immigration status?”) in their own language and in simple English. Information also needs to be available to immigrants and service providers that are geographically dispersed and in communities that lack immigrant integration resources.

Several U.S. states and major cities have taken the approach of establishing a physical Welcoming Center. This is also the approach taken in several European countries with high immigrant populations.²⁹ The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians was created in March 2003 (see box) and has been very successful in helping new immigrants and establishing creative partnerships. In July 2007, the Illinois State Government opened the doors to the Illinois Welcoming Center in Melrose Park, Illinois and served 1,200 people in its first eight months.³⁰ The Illinois Welcoming Center is a one-stop shop model where immigrants and refugees can access services and information from multiple state agencies in one place. During the first visit, welcoming center staff assesses each individual and identifies the barriers they are experiencing. Staff can provide direct access to many services including food stamps, Medicaid, small business assistance, and employment counseling. At the center, they

provide workshops on housing and financial literacy, predatory lending, substance and domestic abuse, parenting skills, and health and nutrition. Additionally, they are able to directly refer immigrants to English and citizenship classes, food pantries, legal assistance, small business centers, and many other services and programs. Perhaps, the important lesson from Illinois’ Welcoming Center is how it persevered in a time of tight budgets.³¹ When the Illinois legislature rejected the Department of Human Service’s request for \$1.7 million to open the center eight state agencies recognized the importance of a one-stop center and chipped in a total of \$1.1 million to fund the Illinois Welcoming Center.

Illinois has also used the approach of mobile welcoming centers. The Governor’s Office of New Americans’ Policy and Advocacy hosted two Illinois Welcoming Days in the summer of 2008. The mobile welcoming centers are resource fairs that provide information on state services for immigrants. Agencies set up booths and provide free health services—cholesterol, diabetes, and blood pressure screenings and vision and dental exams. The first Welcoming Day, held in DuPage County, brought together 700 people from the surrounding area and over 50 state and community agencies. About 2,000 people gathered in Chicago’s Douglas Park for the second festival. The Federation of Michoacán Clubs, a Mexican hometown association, was instrumental in helping guide the effort and many community-based organizations were represented. In 2009, festivals were expected to be held in Rockford and Champaign as well as the previous locations.

- ❶ **The Policy Council recommends that the State fund a series of strategies to provide “one stop” information to immigrants. We propose that this be a three-pronged approach, for the short-, medium-, and long-term. Specifically, we recommend:**

SUBREC | In the short-term, establishing a very simple, multi-lingual website that provides important information and links to resources and benefits. This should be a well-designed, attractive, and simple site that is easy to navigate. It can include links to existing resources and programs (such as those available through the Seattle Public Library site). Informational materials might address:

PROMISING PRACTICE: Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians

The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians was created in 2003 after a comprehensive study of Philadelphia area immigrant service providers revealed that the services offered to immigrants, while extensive, were also fragmented and hard to access. In fact, every organization surveyed in the study discussed the need for a centralized information source.

In March 2003, the Welcoming Center opened its doors. Its primary focus is to serve as centralized employment and referral center and to promote immigrant participation in Pennsylvania's political, social, and economic life.

Since 2003, the Welcoming Center has served over 4,000 clients from over 70 countries. Their job placement service has directly positioned 150 immigrants since mid-2004. They have built strong partnerships with the business community and provided resources to orient companies on how to hire and work with immigrants and created a specific guide on hiring skilled immigrant professionals.

Other accomplishments include:

- Partnering with a number of organizations such as the Enterprise Center and the PA Economy League to raise the awareness in the region of the importance of immigration as it relates to economic development;
- Publishing of *The Immigrant's Resource Manual: What Every Immigrant Needs to Know* in English and Spanish;
- Producing a series of guides on "How to Start a Business", which provides key information on the basic procedures for opening a range of different businesses (flower shops to delis) in Philadelphia;
- Creating a guide for immigrant professionals to introduce them to American business culture and help guide them through a job search;
- Identifying four high-growth industries in Pennsylvania and developed detailed career guides for each industry: accountant, mechanical engineer, systems analyst, and teacher. These guides outline the process for becoming a certified professional and provide information about various types of jobs within each field, regional employers who hire these professionals, salary ranges, and employment resources.

Source: www.welcomingcenter.org

- *How to access existing health care services, the State Family Assistance program, and Washington Basic Health*
- *Community and personal safety topics such as child safety seats, bicycle safety, internet crimes, scams*
- *Information on banking and credit*
- *Rights of immigrants including information on deportation and rights if a family member is detained*
- *Specific information on certification or licensing for high growth industries in Washington and a career guide for immigrant professionals*
- *Programs, resources or trainings available for immigrants looking to start small businesses*

SUBREC | In the short- and medium-term, directing the State to hold mobile resource fairs or Welcoming Center days in high-density immigrant areas across the state, similar to Illinois.

SUBREC | In the short-term, conducting a feasibility study for creating a physical welcome center, and, in the medium- to long-term, working to allocate funds for a physical welcome center.

- ❶ **The Policy Council also recommends that the Office of the Attorney General provide more multilingual information and conduct active outreach to different immigrant communities on their services, particularly focusing on areas of credit, payday lending, mortgages, notaries and other scams.**

“

“There are a lot of service providers out in the community but we don’t have a centralized point of information.”

Cintha PIOCOS – Diverse Community Specialist, Pierce County Library

“Part of integration is to provide people who are not yet citizens how they can engage in the community ... it would be great to have a Welcoming Center or even an Integration Center or clearinghouse.”

Martin VALADEZ – Vice President for Diversity & Research at Columbia

“I have a big problem in the US. I don’t know my rights. I don’t know what I can do or what I can’t do.”

Naomi KRANT, sharing what an ESL Student wrote to the Policy Council



RECOMMENDATION FOUR

Enhance Language Access

LANGUAGE BARRIERS PREVENT many English Language Learners (ELLs) from interacting effectively with medical institutions and government agencies. Without translated documents and oral interpretation ELL community members “are less likely to understand and exercise their rights and obligations, less able to access government services, and less able to achieve economic stability.”³² While it is crucial to offer opportunities to learn English, at the same time language access services must be provided to ensure that language barriers do not limit the ability of immigrants to integrate into their communities. Further, our state (any program or agency that receives federal funds) has an obligation to provide language access. However, it is equally important that smaller agencies and programs across the state that do not receive Federal funds are also encouraged and provided with assistance to create language access plans.

Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 declares, “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”³³ More recently, Title VI was reaffirmed by Presidents Clinton and Bush in 2000 and 2001 respectively. Executive Order 13166 requires that any program or agency receiving federal funds take reasonable steps to facilitate access for ELLs.

Local language access legislation has been passed across the country—by state legislature, mayoral executive order, city ordinance, and resolution—to ensure that ELLs are able to access programs and services without the encumbrance of language barriers that might prevent them from accessing services at the same rates as other individuals. These local and state laws mirror federal-level legislation that requires agencies receiving federal dollars to provide ELLs “meaningful access” to services.

Though we are now a national model in providing language access services, Washington State has not always been an exemplary provider of language access services. Today,

Washington State has many language access policies in place. A few instructive policies that the Policy Council reviewed were the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) policy, City of Seattle Executive Order 01-07, and the Mattawa Police Department’s Language Access Plan.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES (DSHS) POLICY

In the 1980’s and early 1990’s DSHS received complaints from client advocacy groups that DSHS was not granting LEP individuals equal access to programs.³⁴ In 1991, Washington State DSHS faced litigation after misinterpretation by an interpreter resulted in the department incorrectly denying a client public assistance benefits.³⁵ Consequently, DSHS entered into agreements with the Office for Civil Rights, which they have surpassed, and focused on building a language access policy that would ensure LEP individuals’ equal access to its programs. A Limited English Proficiency Task Force meets monthly to discuss language access issues within DSHS and the Language Interpreter Services and Translation (LIST) office was opened to help implement the necessary changes. The Washington Administrative Code (WAC 388-271-0010) clearly outlines the department’s responsibilities for providing at no cost translation and interpretation services. DSHS has created the infrastructure to properly track, coordinate, and provide language access services.

DSHS has a few particularly noteworthy promising practices:

- o Ability to easily track a client’s language and send translated documents. DSHS enters a Primary Language Code (there are 90 available) into the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) that tracks a client’s eligibility for benefits. ACES can automatically send over 200 different types of letters to a client’s residence in their nine supported languages (English, Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Somali). Letters needed in other languages are sent to a contract interpreter and then sent to a client’s home.³⁶

- o Creation and implementation of a language testing and certification program for bilingual employees and contracted translators and interpreters in approximately eight languages.³⁷
- o Routinely conducts audits to review all 60 field offices and monitor the level of services provided to LEP clients. The reception area and waiting room is assessed for signs on the walls announcing availability of translation; receptionist's familiarity with procedures necessary to assist an LEP client; and reception and appointment slips available in all five primary languages. Written communications, interpreter procedures, use of fast fax for translated forms, and case record reading ensure a thorough audit.³⁸

CITY OF SEATTLE EXECUTIVE ORDER 01-07

In 2005, leaders in immigrant communities, through participation in OneAmerica's Community Leadership Council, came together to present a brownbag forum at Seattle City Council. In a packed chamber of 300 people, immigrants also told Council members of the challenges they faced, including language access to City services. City Council members unanimously passed a resolution directing the Mayor to develop a plan to address the issues raised. In 2006, Mayor Greg Nickels hired a consultant team to learn how the City of Seattle government could strengthen how they serve immigrant and refugee communities living in the city. Seattle. One of the report's key findings was that, "Language and cultural barriers limit access to services and civic participation, and slow cultural adjustment."³⁹ In January 2007, the mayor signed Executive Order 01-07 "City-Wide Translation and Interpretation Policy." The executive order required that all city departments adopt its new language access policy.⁴⁰ The policy delineates how city departments can provide translated vital documents and interpretation by using a city employee run Language Bank, Language Line, and contracted interpreters/translators. Seattle provides translation of vital documents in the city's top seven languages and provides translation of critical documents in seven second tier languages. The city

uses Census data to identify when five percent of residents of any given neighborhood may require an interpreter for a neighborhood event. Additionally, all community meeting invitations inform the public that interpreters can be provided in top tier languages.

MATTAWA POLICE DEPARTMENT'S LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

The Mattawa Police Department's Language Access Policy is even more recent and consequently is not highlighted here as a promising practice but to demonstrate that language access is an issue of importance for the entire state. Like the DSHS language access policy it was the result of a lawsuit and an agreement with the Department of Justice. In 2005, a class action was filed on behalf of nine Mattawa day care providers. The women "alleged that the white mayor of Mattawa and the all-white Mattawa police department urged a state investigation that included inappropriate searches, unnecessary immigration inquiries, intimidation, and legal documents that were never translated into Spanish."⁴¹ In 2006, a group of Mattawa women spoke out about the "long waits and general disinterest when they called 9-1-1 or when they went to local police."⁴² When one woman called the police about a domestic violence incident the police let the suspect leave the scene to locate a bilingual neighbor. He never came back. In 2008, Town of Mattawa in an agreement with the Department of Justice created a Language Access Plan for the town and Police Department. It outlines a language policy for 9-1-1 calls, emergency response, and interrogation.

The Governor of a State has tremendous power to ensure language access for English Language Learners. Taking a strong stand on ensuring language access is an important way to ensure immigrants can fully access programs and benefits currently in existence, as well as protect their rights. It is notable that barriers to language access that resulted in the creation of language access policies were on both sides of the state—in the largest city in Washington and in one of the smallest towns, demonstrating that language access is an issue of importance for the entire state.

CHECKLIST FOR LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN REVIEW : Elements of an effective written language access plan

1. Guidelines or factors to be considered in determining effective and meaningful access to services by LEP persons.
2. Competent and timely oral language services to LEP persons.
 - a. *Procedure for providing interpretation/translation services.*
 - b. *A sample multilingual signage asking LEP customers to identify the language they need.*
 - c. *List of multilingual employees.*
 - d. *List of most common languages encountered.*
3. Procedures to ensure written translations of vital documents to LEP groups (5% or 1,000, whichever is less).
 - a. *List of vital documents for translation.*
 - b. *A sample multilingual notice about translation needs.*
 - c. *Procedures of written notices of right to receive competent and free oral interpretation of written materials to LEP groups subject to Section 371-33(c), HRS.*
4. A data collection and reporting system to determine the characteristics of LEP customers, the type and quality of services provided, the number and nature of complaints, if any, etc.
 - a. *A sample of the data collection instrument.*
5. Evaluation process to determine if goals were met and to review and revise the plan every two years.
6. Procedure to provide for the training of staff that will be in contact with LEP customers.
7. A language access coordinator or point person who will be in charge of the implementation of the plan.
8. Procedure to provide for the hiring of qualified personnel who are bilingual to fill existing, vacant public contact positions, to the extent that such bilingual services are needed. (for State Agencies only.)

Source: Hawaii Office of Language Access, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

- 1 The Policy Council recommends that the Governor sign a Language Access Executive Order that requires all state agencies to assess their abilities to communicate with ELLs. Each agency will name a language access coordinator who will develop and implement a plan that provides language assistance, such as use of bilingual staff (including assignment pay for bilingual ability), telephone interpretation, oral or written translation services, and translation of important public documents, in at least the languages that five percent of the state speaks. The Executive Order can also direct agencies to provide signage in agencies and courts and other important places to ensure that LEP individuals know they have the right to free translation. In unveiling the Executive Order, the Governor can also urge city and county agencies to make similar assessments and create language access plans.

SUBREC I (long term): Establish an Office of Language Access to ensure compliance with the law and to provide technical assistance.

- 2 The Policy Council also recommends that the current DSHS interpreter brokerage system-certification testing be reviewed to balance English proficiency and target language proficiency and then expanded to be available to other agencies.



RECOMMENDATION FIVE

Promote Cross-Cultural Community Safety

THE POLICY COUNCIL BELIEVES that keeping communities safe is an important part of ensuring successful integration, and that trust between law enforcement and communities is essential to ensuring community safety. Some communities absorbing new immigrants may have tension or fear that immigrants bring crime, a misconception that has been debunked by extensive research⁴³ across the country and actual experiences in places such as Pasco, Washington. Many immigrants, at the same time, are afraid to report crimes and initiate contact with law enforcement. Research shows that language barriers, cultural misperceptions, and fear of deportation lead to under-reporting of crimes and avoidance of police.⁴⁴

For law enforcement departments, the lack of resources and experience and an inability to recruit and retain officers with needed linguistic and cultural skills can exacerbate difficulties in providing services and building trust. Increased enforcement activities by federal immigration agencies and the federal government's assertion that it can conduct "border" searches as far as 100 miles from any external boundary, have created another challenge to community safety, eroding the trust that many local law enforcement agencies have worked to build with immigrant communities. There are examples across Washington of both excellent leadership from law enforcement and community leaders to intentionally build strong relationships, as well as examples of abuses of power by law enforcement that have further eroded trust. In some cases, this abuse of power has led to lawsuits that ultimately required development of model policies in that area (see Town of Mattawa Language Access Plan in Recommendation Four).

In public testimony, the Policy Council heard repeatedly that immigrants—particularly undocumented immigrants—are afraid to come forward and work with law enforcement on reporting crimes because they are afraid they will be asked about immigration status or that their involvement will somehow ultimately lead to deportation. This fear represents a significant obstacle in ensuring public safety. In some jurisdictions, such as Seattle, laws have been put into place that prohibit law enforcement and other city officials from asking about immigration status, except in very limited circumstances. These laws have been important in communicating to the broad immigrant community that local law enforcement's job is to protect people from crime—regardless of immigration status.

Public safety is also enhanced by ensuring that everyone, regardless of status, can access a driver license. Recognizing that not having a driver license does not stop people from driving, Washington has been a leader and one of just a few states that has prioritized public safety by allowing the issuance of drivers licenses without regard to immigration status. We also heard, however, public testimony relating that some licensing bureaus are discriminatory and rude to immigrants, often require documentation beyond what is necessary, and that recent changes to the documentation requirements to obtain a driver license may have made it much harder for immigrants to obtain valid identification. One undocumented young man and his teacher testified on his inability to sit for his GED exam because he has been unable to obtain a state I.D. despite several attempts.

While Washington is still learning how to deliver public safety services to diverse communities across the entire state, law enforcement officials have demonstrated that trust and positive interactions can occur when police leadership actively promotes a policy of good will and trust and demands an environment of respect by all staff.

The issue of fear in immigrant and refugee communities of law enforcement, including perceptions of racial profiling, emerged many times during our deliberations. To this end, the Policy Council examined current racial profiling laws and considered ways to strengthen those laws and practices. Racial profiling is an issue that affects many immigrants—profiling of immigrants can occur based on their race or race tied to assumptions about immigration status. We learned that while Washington State Patrol has taken active steps to create strong racial profiling policy, but that the public—over 20 percent of minorities and above 10 percent of whites perceive that profiling is widespread and the majority thinks that at least a few troopers profile—has a perception that Washington State Patrol profiles.⁴⁵ The Policy Council believes it is essential to address community perception of law enforcement as well as ensure that law enforcement operate under guidelines and model policies to prevent racial profiling or other activities that undermine trust. Without these policies at a local level, the perception only grows. Establishing standard policies and procedures that keep the distinction clear between local law enforcement and federal immigration agents is one component to maintaining trust and reducing fear.

WASHINGTON STATE DRIVER'S LICENSE

IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Washington State is one of four states that do not require lawful presence to apply for a driver license¹. State residency must be proven and a declaration form may be signed instead of providing a Social Security number. If Washington State were to begin to require lawful presence of those applying for a driver license, it would have an enormous impact on public safety. Immigrants depend on the legal ability to drive just as much as citizens do. By taking the ability to obtain a driver license away from undocumented immigrants, the number of unlicensed and uninsured drivers will increase, endangering all those who are on the road. Unlicensed drivers are almost five times more likely to be in fatal crashes and hit and runs². Allowing immigrants to obtain driver licenses also assists law enforcement personnel, as immigrants who have driver licenses are more likely to interact with state and local law enforcement³.

1. (April 2009) *Overview of State Driver's License Requirements*. National Immigration Law Center.

2. (Jan 2008) Moran, T. *Why Denying Driver's Licenses to Undocumented Immigrants Harms Public Safety and Makes Our Communities Less Secure*. National Immigration Law Center.

3. *Ibid.*

The Policy Council focused on finding ways to institutionalize good practices and incent law enforcement to focus on implementing policies that would build trust and ultimately promote safety. The following are several recommendations around public safety.

1 The Policy Council recommends that the Washington State Sheriffs Association (WSSA) and Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) develop a model policy for building trust and fostering cross-cultural relations. This policy could include:

SUBREC | Creation of a Language Access Plan.

SUBREC | Development of an organizational self-assessment tool to measure cultural and linguistic competency and assist law enforcement agencies in reviewing their administrative capacity to work effectively with recently arrived immigrant populations.

SUBREC | A requirement that local police regularly work with and seek the opinions of immigrant community leaders/ community liaisons through the formation and use of an immigrant advisory board.

SUBREC | Creation of a working group to create a model policy on bilingual recruitment and retention.

SUBREC | Availability of small stipends for language training for monolingual officers.

SUBREC | Pay differentials for bilingual employees.

SUBREC | Standard training, incorporated into existing requirements, for new sheriffs and police officers on cultural awareness, racial profiling, and building trust with immigrant communities.

SUBREC | Information outreach to the immigrant community by all law enforcement personnel (not just a department within the agency), conducted using materials in the immigrant's native language that explain community values, personal safety, scams, how to contact law enforcement and what to expect, local and state government, court process, child safety seats, bicycle safety, etc. These publications should be available at the Welcoming Center website (See Recommendation 3).

SUBREC | Conduct citizen academies that explain the inner workings of the law enforcement agency to help immigrant

WHAT IS A U-VISA?

community members become familiar with how police officers perform their duties and how the department serves the community.

- ❶ **The Policy Council recommends that the Governor convene a group of immigration advocates, law enforcement officials, and community members to develop model policies that prohibit state law enforcement agencies from inquiring about immigration status except in very limited circumstances. The Council also recommends that the Governor support the adoption of these policies at the local level in counties and cities across the state.**
- ❷ **The Policy Council recommends that the State launch a campaign or public education sessions to ensure that immigrant and refugee communities, law enforcement officials and state agencies are aware of U-visas and for the State to support efforts to facilitate increased access by community members to U-visas, which offer humanitarian protections when immigrants are victims of crime.**
- ❸ **The Policy Council recommends that the State ensure that state-issued identification documents be accessible to immigrants—including undocumented immigrants—and refugees in order to ensure community safety. The Policy Council also urges the Governor to work with the Department of Licensing (DOL) to ensure compliance with the agency’s no-discrimination policy and to also ensure consistent and fair treatment by DOL offices that serve high numbers of immigrants.**

SUBREC | The Policy Council endorses Washington’s policy of allowing all state residents to apply for driver licenses without requiring proof of lawful presence (see box).

SUBREC | The January 2009 Department of Licensing Revised Standards and Procedures should be reviewed to see if the new procedures have impacted the ability of refugees and undocumented immigrants to obtain driver licenses and, if necessary, the standards should be amended to embody a policy that ensures that refugees and undocumented immigrants are still able to access driver licenses. The recent changes deleted 34 previously accepted documents (and added four I.D. documents).

A U-Visa is a form of humanitarian protection under immigration law for immigrants who have been victims of crimes. An immigrant may be eligible for a U-Visa if he or she has been a victim of certain criminal activity, has suffered physical or mental abuse as a result and helps or has helped the law enforcement officials or prosecutors in the investigation or the prosecution of that crime. If an immigrant is granted a U-Visa, they will receive temporary immigration status for up to 4 years that will allow them to live and work lawfully within the United States. Immigration authorities may provide U-Visas to a spouse or children of the victim. In the case of a child under 16 who was a victim, his or her parents and minor siblings may also be eligible for U-Visa status. After three years in that status, U-Visa holders can petition for permanent residency.

HOW DOES AN IMMIGRANT QUALIFY FOR A U-VISA?

An immigrant qualifies for a U-Visa if:

1. They have been the victim of a qualifying crime and have suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of the crime.
2. They have information about that criminal activity in the U.S.
3. They have helped, are helping, or will be helping the police or prosecutors in the investigation or prosecution of the crime.

WHAT CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES QUALIFY FOR A U-VISA?

Rape, Torture, Trafficking, Incest, Abusive Sexual Contact, Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Kidnapping or False Imprisonment, Felonious Assault, Prostitution, Black mail, Obstruction of Justice, Perjury, Extortion, Manslaughter, Murder, Involuntary Servitude, Conspiracy or Solicitation of any of these crimes



“If I don’t have the safety for my family,
I don’t have anything.”

Community member testimony

“Trust between the community and law
enforcement is essential for public safety.”

Yakima County Sheriff **Kenneth IRWIN**
(also a New Americans Policy Council member)

RECOMMENDATION SIX

Provide Immigrant and Refugee Professionals Pathways for Career Re-Entry

MANY FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS of Washington State come to the United States with remarkable experience, skills, and often substantial professional careers behind them. Many hold advanced degrees in the fields of medicine, nursing, engineering, teaching, or other such professional fields. When they arrive, unfortunately, these professionals face barriers to transferring their education, training or certifications to the U.S. marketplace. The barriers that skilled immigrants in our country face are numerous: English Language acquisition; accessibility to and availability of job re-training programs and informational resources; and institutional barriers such as state laws, licensing procedures, and national board requirements.

States have a tremendous amount of power in regard to professional licensing. The area of providing legal immigrant and refugee professionals pathways for career re-entry is an area where the state can make a substantial difference.

Often, the very fields that underemployed immigrant professionals are trained to work in are the same fields experiencing significant shortages in qualified professionals.

For example, doctors and nurses remain in short supply, not only in Washington but across the country. It is estimated that the U.S. may lack between 85,000-200,000 physicians and 800,000 nurses by the year 2020.⁴⁶ The chart below details the percent of people in Washington who are living in designated Health Care Professional Shortage Areas and are underserved. The number of health care professionals lacking does not account for any shortages in areas that do not meet this designation.

The Policy Council heard compelling testimony from a number of professionals who have been unable to transfer their credentials and represent an enormous untapped opportunity for the state. ESL teachers and others who work with professionally trained immigrants and see the negative consequences of their stagnation from lack of skills transfer also testified. One teacher testified that her class was comprised of, "three pediatricians, a computer programmer, two engineers, and a geologist . . . All of the students expressed how frustrated they were because they were cooks. They were

UNDESERVED POPULATION LIVING IN DESIGNATED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS SHORTAGE AREAS AND PRACTITIONERS REQUIRED TO MEET NEED FOR CARE: UNITED STATES AND WASHINGTON

PERCENT OF POPULATION UNDERSERVED IN U.S. \ 2008 ▶	9.5%	18.7%	10.4%
PERCENT OF POPULATION UNDERSERVED IN WA \ 2008 ▶	11.8%	25.1%	8.1%
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS UNITED STATES LACKS \ 2009 ▶	16,336 primary care practitioners	5,145 dental practitioners	9,432 mental health practitioners
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WASHINGTON LACKS \ 2009 ▶	282 primary care practitioners	164 dental practitioners	147 mental health practitioners

Table 2. Sources: (2008) Kaiser Family Foundation. Statehealthfacts.org. *Washington Health Shortage Areas* ; (2009) Office of Shortage Designation. Bureau of Health Professions. Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Tables 1-5: Health Professional Shortage Areas.

cleaning apartments. They were on welfare, and they had very little opportunity to advance.”

One immigrant testified compellingly before the Policy Council about his experience as a trained Iraqi dentist who had been unable to find a job. He was very surprised when he came to the U.S. and was given welfare and told that it would be difficult for him to enter his profession. Faced with the reality that it would be months or years before he could do dental work, he applied for a wide range of jobs and was after months of unemployment hired on as a cook before getting laid off. He urged the Policy Council to explore ways to help credential immigrant professionals by asking them to do practical public service under a certified professional in rural areas, or other areas that have difficulty finding trained doctors.

The Puget Sound Welcome Back Center, a promising practice in Washington, helps immigrants transfer the professional skills acquired in their home country to jobs in the healthcare industry. Opened in the fall of 2008 at Highline Community College in Federal Way, Welcome Back has already assisted 130 healthcare professionals from over 20 countries of origin to take the steps to enter the U.S. health care system. Unable to work in their chosen calling, many immigrants come to Welcome Back depressed. Kris Mason, interim director of Puget Sound Welcome Back, relates that some of the clients they see are working as janitors in hospitals in an attempt to connect to their past profession. Welcome Back helps these individuals prepare for board tests, navigate licensing procedures, and consider alternative health care career options for which they may be eligible. Welcome Back's mission is to build bridges between immigrants and the healthcare industry. By helping immigrants contribute their skills and knowledge to the healthcare system, the healthcare industry's growing need for linguistically and culturally competent healthcare services is met.

Washington State is limited in that it does not have a program that offers health care professionals the ability to enter into their same profession. A program at Miami-Dade College in Florida has established the Foreign Physician Alternative Certification Program (FOPAC), which provides orientation, assistance and training to foreign health care professionals living in the U.S. and provides a track that lets health care professionals re-certify in their chosen field.⁴⁷ Additionally,

the State is limited in that it does not yet have programs for other occupations. Programs or even information that helps immigrants with other backgrounds navigate the professional landscape and re-enter their careers is needed.

Recognizing the indispensable contributions of Washington's immigrant workforce to our state's economy, the Policy Council urges the state to reap the skill opportunities that professional foreign trained immigrants bring our state by facilitating pathways for career re-entry.

1 The Policy Council recommends that Washington State assist highly-educated and high-skilled immigrants and refugees to enter the workforce at a professional level through a variety of strategies including:

SUBREC | Compiling and making available region-specific information on job availability, wage rates, and clear, easy-to-understand instructions on how to acquire licensing, certifications, and credentials.

SUBREC | Expanding funding for projects that assist health care professionals and other needed professions.

SUBREC | Through Governor's direction, directing professional licensing boards and the State Apprenticeship Council to create work groups of professionals in high priority fields to determine how requirements for state licensing for specific occupations can be altered to maintain the high standards promoted by licensing but ensure the utilization of skilled immigrants with previous training. This could include a pilot program such as the one proposed during the Tacoma hearing, where foreign professionals could spend a certain amount of time "apprenticing" to a trained professional in shortage areas. If completed satisfactorily, that apprenticeship could serve as part of the necessary requirements to obtain credentials to practice.

SUBREC | Encourage a partnership between the State and universities or community colleges to create an educational program similar to the Cuban school (see box) for skilled immigrants and refugees to help them transition into their trained fields.

SUBREC | Include a career guide for immigrant professionals as part of the proposed Welcoming Center website (see Recommendation Three).

CASE STUDY: Learning from Experiences of Cuban and Vietnamese Medical Professionals

There is, in fact, precedent for credentialing immigrant professionals in United States history. From 1962-1973, the federal government spent approximately \$857 million assisting Cuban refugees. Employment and professional training programs were a priority area for allocated funds. Programs included vocational training, programs for skilled professionals, conversational English and “English language retooling courses for Cuban professionals.”⁴⁸

Several universities created “re-tooling” or “refresher” programs for Cuban professionals. The most successful built on the skills those professionals already had and prepared them to meet licensing test requirements, use English terminology, and gave assistance with job placement. Unsuccessful programs required repeating years of coursework, did not provide job placement, or were in states where citizenship was a requirement for licensing. One of the best examples of a re-tooling program was created for Cuban physicians by Dr. Ralph “Buck” Jones at the University of Miami.⁴⁹ The school was not a medical school—the Cuban professionals already were skilled doctors—but for twelve weeks they drilled in conversational English, took graduate medical courses, memorized English medical terminology, and mastered the multiple choice test taking skills that the certification exam required.⁵⁰

National boards’ and states’ rigidity or responsiveness to foreign professionals also greatly impacted Cuban refugees. For example, the American Dental Board has never created a foreign certification pathway, while physicians and veterinarians were able to take exams to recertify. Some states failed to recognize foreign certification exams. Yet other states provided opportunities for apprenticeships or short residencies that would put Cuban professionals on their path toward licensing.

In the 1970’s, many small towns throughout the U.S. supported Vietnamese physicians as they studied for their Educational Council for Foreign Medical Graduates Exam and then Federation Licensure Exam.⁵¹ In exchange the doctors agreed to practice in the community for at least two years. The Federal government also recognized the benefits of placing immigrant doctors in shortage areas and consequently resettled some Vietnamese general practitioners on Indian reservations.⁵²

The Cuban and Vietnamese experience shows us that there are, in fact, effective ways to provide credentialing to professionally trained immigrants, to help immigrants fully utilize their skills and to enable the State to benefit from those skills with no negative effects.



RECOMMENDATION SEVEN

Celebrate Washington’s Diverse Immigrant Communities

IMMIGRANTS ARE PART of our social and economic fabric and have been throughout history. The issue of immigration is tied deeply to our state’s workforce and family needs. One in five Washington children is an immigrant or has at least one immigrant parent. Immigrants are over 14 percent of our workforce and Washington relies on immigrant workers to contribute to our economy in a host of industries and occupations: from apple picking to testing new cancer treatments. Further, immigrants contribute to our economy as taxpayers, consumers, and business owners.

The diversity represented by immigrants is a source of joy and pride for Washington communities. Events that bring entire communities together—immigrant and non-immigrant—and recognize the value of the diversity in the global economy and community are empowering and build community.

The Governor sends a strong signal in establishing this pride and encouraging this type of positive community building through her actions and words. This tone, set by the Governor and other state leaders, is essential in cutting through the often divisive debate and ensuring that our state remains united and strong.

- 1 **The Policy Council recommends that the State establish key days or dates for celebration of immigrants in the State of Washington: specifically, we propose celebrating the September 17th Citizenship Day and June 20th World Refugee Day.**

SUBREC | The Governor should make a media proclamation tied to citizenship day that celebrates the contributions of immigrants to Washington State. New citizens from all over the world, proud to be Americans, could be highlighted. These celebration days can also be used as vehicles for getting important messages out to immigrants.

- 2 **The State should identify existing state campaigns that can allocate resources to a sub-media campaign that highlights the benefits immigrants and refugees bring to our state.** This media campaign could highlight prominent immigrant leaders and contributors, as well as new immigrants and refugees who are eager to enrich our community.

SUBREC | The state should encourage the use of immigrant/ refugee faces and stories in state materials that are used in media campaigns, including state websites, posters, tourism, etc. to reflect the diversity of our population.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT

Advocate Actively on Key Federal Issues That Relate to Immigrant Integration

AS THE POLICY COUNCIL CONSIDERED how the State could best integrate immigrants it became clear that while there is much that can be done on a state level, opportunities to further immigrant integration must be advanced at the federal level. It is important for states, including Washington, to advocate actively for changes in federal policy that negatively impact the State's ability to effectively integrate immigrants. For example, states do not have jurisdiction around immigration policies that determine who comes in to America and who stays here, but the effects of a failed immigration system are clearly felt at the state level by immigrant families, service providers, and key businesses for the State's economy, including agriculture and hi-tech. How to integrate immigrants who lack status is one of our state's biggest challenges, but one we must meet. As one participant in the Pasco hearing testified, "The single greatest thing that can be done to integrate immigrants is to pass comprehensive immigration reform."

It is clear that many immigrant families in Washington are hurting as a result of the broken immigration system. One woman who testified about the terrible wait periods (backlogs) to process her application to have her husband here discussed the challenges of working and providing for her kids as a single mom, simply because the applications were not getting processed. Other students gave compelling testimony about living in limbo, or not knowing what their future would be, or not being able to go to college because of their undocumented status and their inability to qualify for financial aid.

The Policy Council also heard significant testimony about difficulties accessing healthcare. As the healthcare debate rages federally, it is an important time to ensure that we do not make things worse for immigrants as we propose healthcare reform. This issue was raised by many at the New Americans Public Hearing in Tacoma. A lack of healthcare is a huge concern to Washington's immigrants. Advocating lifting the five year bar on federal benefits for legal permanent residents would qualify these legal immigrants for programs like Medicaid, bringing in additional dollars to the State. Approximately 12.4 percent of people in Washington are uninsured.⁵³ No doubt a disproportionate number of them are immigrants. Nationally, about 33.5 percent of immigrants are

uninsured, with naturalized citizens less likely to be uninsured (18.0 percent) than non-citizens (44.7 percent).⁵⁴ We applaud the State's position recently of not focusing on immigration status to determine cuts to the basic health plan.

As noted in Recommendations One and Three, the Policy Council concluded that there are gaps in the State's provision of English language acquisition and naturalization services. The Strengthen and Unite Communities with Civics Education and English Skills (SUCCESS) Act of 2009 also recognizes the growing need for English literacy, U.S. history and civics education for immigrants. By amending the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, this bill broadens the types of literacy activities authorized under the Act to include English literacy instruction contextualized in lessons on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization proceedings, civic participation and U.S. history and government.

Another relevant piece of immigrant integration legislation, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is due for reauthorization in 2009. WIA is the main federal funding source for ESL, adult education, and literacy across the United States. The Policy Council recommends that the Governor advocate for a revised funding formula for the WIA Reauthorization Act that accounts for LEP adults with higher than a high school diploma in the Title II funding formula. The current funding formula does not include Limited English Proficient (LEP) adults with a high school degree or higher. However, these adults are still eligible to access Title II funded programs. About 57 percent of LEP adults in Washington have attained a high school diploma or higher but still would benefit from ESL instruction.⁵⁵ Better educated English Language Learners (ELLs) may require less intensive instruction to become proficient in English and there is a large return investment in providing ESL courses for these students. Arguably, providing more funds to compensate states to instruct highly skilled ELLs, could tackle the issue of underemployment of highly skilled immigrants and provide a substantial return to the economy as these ELL adults transition to skilled occupations.

Washington's experience is singular, with our unique mix of high-tech and agricultural industries, the diversity of immigrants here in this State, the positioning in the global world, and as a

NEED FOR HEALTHCARE

“Many of our immigrants who come to this country to do the most dangerous, the dirtiest, and the hardest jobs and they, more than most, need healthcare coverage.” – Mary

“My problem as an immigrant is with healthcare. A week ago my wife had to go to the emergency room. It was only three days after her state healthcare was cut. A year ago it was easy to get coverage, but I cannot get it now.” – Carlos

“Washington State needs more healthcare for immigrants. Why is health insurance so expensive?” – Maria

“If we don’t have good health, we can’t achieve anything.” – Auh

I went to a public hearing over the weekend about healthcare reform and I heard some incredibly uninformed and I would say in some cases mean-spirited comments about how our problems with our healthcare system could be solved if only we could get rid of all the undocumented people here . . . increased access to care for immigrant populations may actually decrease our healthcare costs because it would increase access to preventive care. As it is now, if you don’t have papers your place of last resort is the emergency room as many of you know, which is extremely expensive. So even if you’re just coming from a narrow cost perspective it makes sense to extend coverage to all Americans, and I consider anyone here to be an American. – Kathy

“The main problem [for my mom and dad] is that they don’t have any healthcare . . . When we came here we couldn’t get basic health because there is so many people applying for that basic health. Because my dad had the blood pressure, we are very afraid that someday he will go to hospital. I heard that three days at hospital cost about \$60,000. This is huge money for us and we cannot afford it. . . For my parents it’s very hard because we don’t have any money to leave to buy food, to pay for apartment fee, and especially for the health, for medicine for when we got cold or got flu.” – Ming

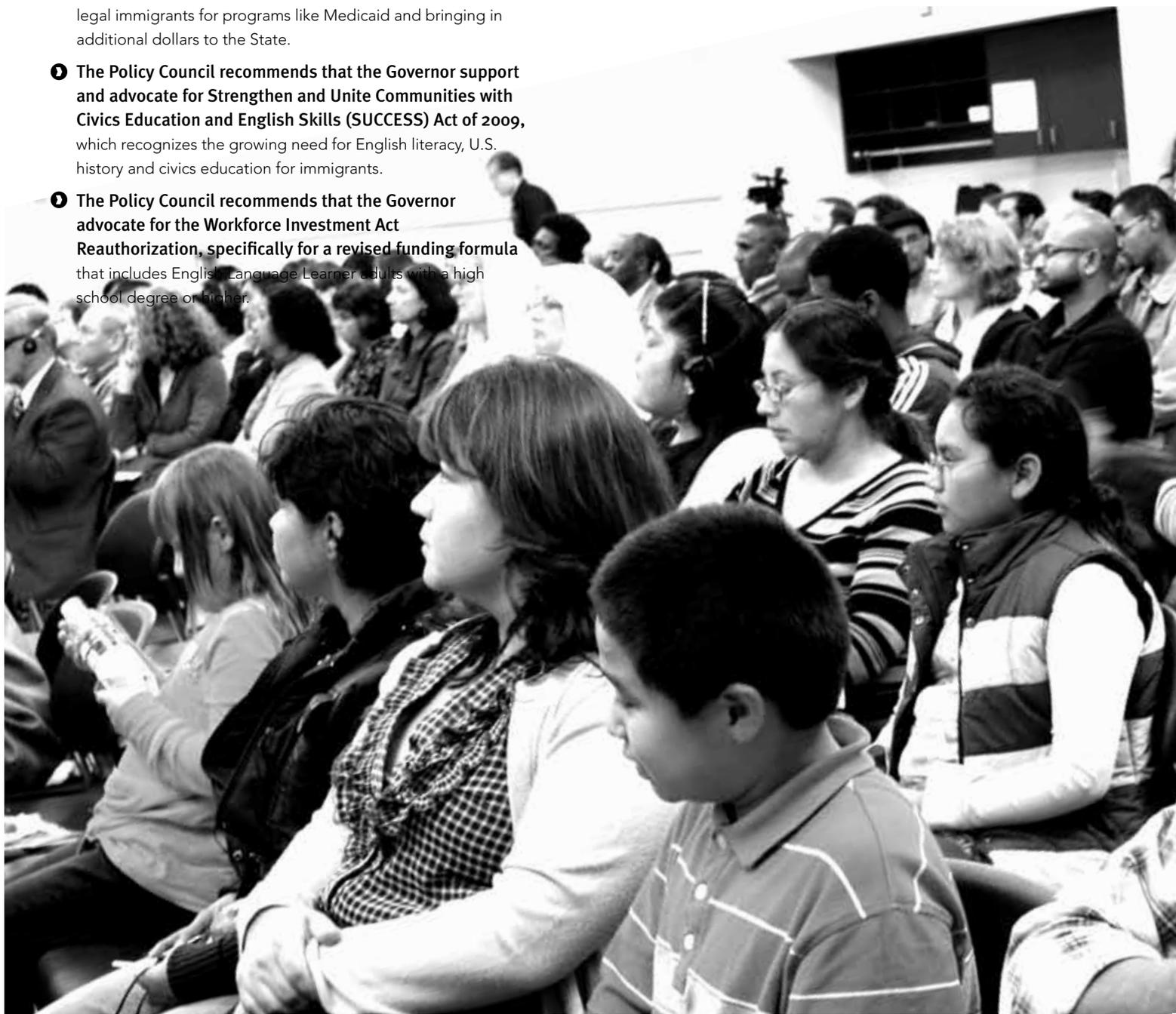
northern border state. The differences in our experiences from other states are vast and our particular situation and needs must be communicated regularly and loudly.

As the State begins the work of implementing the Policy Council’s recommendations, pieces of federal legislation that provide dollars for healthcare, ESL classes, naturalization, and adult basic education provide crucial resources for the task at hand. The need for immigration reform is clearly felt in our state, particularly in the agricultural and high-tech industries, as well as by immigrant families and communities who face fear every day and the pain of brutal family separations. When federal legislation so clearly impacts our state, the Policy Council recommends that the Governor engage actively in that discussion.

- 1 The Policy Council recommends that the Governor continue to publicly support and advocate for federal comprehensive immigration reform, working in closer coordination with coalitions of business, labor, faith and immigrant groups to enact successful comprehensive immigration reform.** The Governor should support comprehensive immigration reform that promotes the reunification of families, provides legal status to undocumented individuals with a path to earned citizenship, addresses current and future worker flows, provides due process and civil liberty protections, and encourages immigrant integration. The country needs legislation to enable employers to legally hire needed immigrant workers and that protects all workers, regardless of immigration status, from mistreatment by employers. Legislation must also support the full integration of immigrants by providing immigrants with quality English instruction, naturalization assistance, and opportunities to move up the economic ladder. Legislation should also provide legalization for students who came to this country as children and graduated from a U.S. high school, currently known as the DREAM Act.
- 1 The Policy Council recommends that the Governor work to ensure that immigrants have access to healthcare as part of federal healthcare reform.** Specifically the Governor should advocate lifting the five year bar on federal healthcare benefits for legal permanent residents, qualifying these

legal immigrants for programs like Medicaid and bringing in additional dollars to the State.

- ❶ **The Policy Council recommends that the Governor support and advocate for Strengthen and Unite Communities with Civics Education and English Skills (SUCCESS) Act of 2009,** which recognizes the growing need for English literacy, U.S. history and civics education for immigrants.
- ❷ **The Policy Council recommends that the Governor advocate for the Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization, specifically for a revised funding formula** that includes English Language Learner adults with a high school degree or higher.



RECOMMENDATION NINE

Continue the New Americans Policy Council

IN THIS REPORT THE POLICY COUNCIL has presented a wide range of recommendations and a plan for immigrant integration that can be implemented in the coming months and coming years. We have prioritized recommendations that would make a tremendous impact on immigrant integration and would increase the economic contributions of immigrants to our state. However, immigrant integration has many important component areas for which we simply did not have enough time or research to make final recommendations. We heard important testimony and began research in these areas but did not have sufficient time to complete recommendations. We believe that several of these areas demand the State's attention and would benefit from the same Policy Council continuing its work for an additional year. This continuation would also give the Council the opportunity to work with state agency representatives to further develop and/or implement some of the recommendations.

- 1 **The Policy Council recommends that the Governor continue the New Americans Policy Council to work with state agencies to implement year one recommendations and to address four primary topics including: Economic Development including Immigrant Access to Credit, Asset Building, and Immigrant Entrepreneurs; Worker Protections; Housing (homelessness to home ownership) and Safety Net Services; and Language Access and other issues in Courts and Medical Settings.**

APPENDIX

NEW AMERICANS EXECUTIVE ORDER

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 · Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 · (360) 753-6780 · www.governor.wa.gov

EXECUTIVE ORDER 08-01

WASHINGTON'S NEW AMERICANS POLICY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, historically and currently, the United States has flourished as a rich and diverse nation due to embracing immigrants from all over the world who moved to our country to experience the freedoms and rights of a democratic society, better the lives of their families, contribute to the economy, and become naturalized citizens;

WHEREAS, the state of Washington continues to benefit and prosper from the cultural diversity, work ethic, and economic contribution that a diverse population has contributed to our state;

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. census bureau, 14 percent of the families in Washington speak a world language other than English;

WHEREAS, Washington has 135,000 legal permanent residents currently eligible to be naturalized as U.S. citizens;

WHEREAS, as part of the global economy, Washington benefits from the talents, contributions, resilience, hard work, entrepreneurialism, and skills of people seeking to become New Americans;

WHEREAS, it is crucial to Washington state's vitality and well-being that Washington is known as and is a state that cherishes, welcomes and sustains its diverse population and the economic growth resulting from that diversity;

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